

BY COMPTON MACKENZIE

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THE SOUTH WIND OF LOVE

BEING VOLUME TWO OF THE FOUR WINDS OF LOVE

By

COMPTON MACKENZIE

BOOK ONE

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TO
NEWMAN FLOWER

My dear Newman,

It was to you in your room at La Belle Sauvage that I first put into words my conception of The Four Winds of Love, which alone would make your name at the head of this dedicatory letter appropriate. That the long process of elaboration ultimately resulted in my being unable to fit it into your list makes me more anxious than ever to inscribe to you this volume so that I can have a chance to thank you for an association of seventeen years without a single disagreement. You thought (and you may yet be right) that four volumes would be a mistake. I could not squeeze my tale into two. You could have compelled me to do so, but you generously allowed our contract to be broken in order that I might write the tale in my own way.

That first volume was treated with such sympathy by almost all its reviewers in this country, the United States and Australia that it is a temptation to make a bid for their sympathetic treatment of the second by enlarging on some of the difficulties by which I was faced. I hope, however, it will not be counted as an appeal for sympathy if I insist that this volume must not be read as even veiled autobiography. That

The Four Winds of Love

I have drawn upon my own experience for certain historical incidents is obvious, but it will be a waste of time for people to try to identify characters or search for facts in what is a work of fiction. One or two of the subsidiary characters have been drawn from life, but the originals of such are no longer alive. The principal characters are pure creations of my fancy and are not even founded upon models. The two islands of Lipsia and Icaros are adumbrations of real islands, but all their inhabitants are fictitious and also much of their topography. Mileto is a cloud-cuckoo place of my own. So is Citrano. These remarks on places apply to ships, and even where I have occasionally used actual incidents the people who played their parts in such incidents have not appeared. I was never in Salonica, and that portion of the tale which concerns Salonica might have been placed equally well at any Base. Salonica happened to be the Base geographically necessary.

Goethe, well over a century ago, deplored the fact that the increasing publicity of an artist's life precluded the somnambulistic state in which a work of art should be achieved. And what was publicity then compared with to-day? Unfortunately when we begin to write we are not so sure of success as to preserve from the start a strict anonymity, and indeed anonymity nowadays is no longer recognized as the privilege of a writer.

The South Wind

The West Wind of Love will take up the story where it stops with this volume

Well, with all its faults, my dear Newman, I offer you The South Wind of Love and with it my gratitude for more than can be expressed with a book however long.

Yours ever,

Compton Mackenzie

SUIDHEACHAN

ISLE OF BARRA

July 2nd, 1937

The South Wind of Love

THE PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE IN LARNAY-MOZÈRE shimmered in the stilly heat of an August noon without sign of life except where the two waiters of the Café de la République drowsed among the empty tables and chairs set out on the pavement in the shade of a striped awning of buff and Venetian red, and where beneath the trimmed acacias at attention round some monument to bygone political zeal a gaunt ochreous cur slavered at his haunches in pursuit of fleas. The hoarse chimes of the clock in the gothic tower of Saint Denis began to strike twelve, followed a second later by the shallow chimes of the clock in the town hall, which some six years ago had been presented to Larnay by a free-thinking mayor to commemorate the relief secured to the State by the law of December 1905 from any further financial responsibility for the religious organization of Catholics, Protestants or Jews. As the pigeons fluttered down from the church tower to escape that insistent noise of time, the rumble and creak of a waggon drawn by two large white cows was added to the chiming clocks, and to both, before the hour had struck, the honk of a motor-horn when a pale-green Panhard landaulette drove across the Place from the Rue de Lyon and stopped in front of a biscuit-coloured house with faded blue jalousies at the corner of the Rue de Grenoble. A tall and handsome woman, tied up in those voluminous silk veils demanded by the dusty roads of 1912, alighted from the car and passed quickly from the blaze of sunlight to embrace in the refreshing shadows of the open front door a burly old man with a white moustache and imperial wearing a grey alpaca jacket. The door closed behind them. The car drove on to the stable-yard at the back of the house. The waggon drawn by the cows had passed. The clocks

had ceased their clangour The pigeons had flown back to their tower The ochreous cur had stretched himself out to sleep The waiters under the striped awning of the Cafe de la Republique still drowsed among the empty chairs and tables The Place de la République was again silent in the August sunlight

"Oh, I am so happy to be home for a little while," Gabrielle Derozier exclaimed "Nothing changes here And just now I am more anxious than ever before in my life that nothing should change"

She had looked along the cool hall to the french-windows opening into the walled garden and then backward over her shoulder to her father's little counting-house from which was emerging the figure of the old clerk who himself had not changed since she could remember

"Monsieur Peccoud," she exclaimed, cordially offering both hands in an impulsive gesture

"Mademoiselle is welcome," said the old clerk, bowing above the outstretched hand he took

The same quill behind his ear! The same black alpaca jacket of how many summers! The same rosy cheeks and shining bald head and flock of silvery curls!

"I am marvellously well We stopped at Mâcon last night Such dust"

The old clerk shook his head

"There is the result of driving in these automobiles, mademoiselle"

"We averaged fifty kilometres the whole way from Paris"

"Terrible! Terrible!"

Monsieur Peccoud was about to enlarge on the danger which the automobile had added to life, with illustrations from his weekly visit to the Lyons office of the firm of Derozier et Fils, exporters of Rhône wines—this counting house in Larnay-Mozère being but a kind of old toy

to provide Monsieur Derozier himself with the illusion that the business was still being conducted as it was once upon a time before his two sons had brought it up to date—when Madame Derozier appeared in the hall, and the old clerk discreetly withdrew to his tall desk

"My darling!" exclaimed Madame Derozier in English

She was a fragile little woman close upon seventy years of age, and the richness and warmth of her contralto voice always surprised even that daughter who had inherited it

Monsieur Derozier smiled with an air of benign condescension as if the use of English by his wife and daughter were a game being played by children. In spite of having been married to an Englishwoman for forty-five years he knew hardly a word of his wife's language. She had been the daughter of a long-established Bordeaux exporter with a French mother and a French wife, and there was nothing English about her except an ability to speak the language, an accomplishment she had demanded for her children

Usually Gabrielle Derozier indulged in no more than the echo of her mother's welcoming ejaculation at these visits to her home, but on this occasion she was proceeding to give her news of the last six months in English when her father interrupted with a gesture of protest

"*Assez! assez!* Have the goodness to remember I cannot understand a word of what you two are saying"

"*Pardon, papa* I have been acting for so many months in London that I was almost forgetting"

"And go and get yourself ready," her father added, "for I am sure *dejeuner* will be waiting for us"

Gabrielle hurried away to her room on the ripple of a laugh, for at thirty-two she was old enough to take pleasure in being thus ordered about by her father, she who had successfully asserted her right to independence by becoming a pupil at the Conservatoire when she was

eighteen and after a desperate struggle with old-fashioned prejudice had made her *debut* two years later. During those twelve years on the stage she had achieved success in two countries, and that first fierce opposition seemed fantastic now.

"Yet nothing changes here," she repeated to herself, gazing round the room which had been hers since she was eight years old. In spite of the luggage to be unpacked she was glad she had not brought Victorine with her. Last time Victorine had wanted to rearrange her room, and had even bundled away out of sight that row of dear tattered old books, *Les Malheurs de Sophie*, *La Petite Fadette*, and the rest of them, just to fill the bookcase with the bright yellow covers of the latest Parisian vogue.

"*Et ce lit, madame! Quelle horreur!*"

Yes, it was certainly a hard and narrow bed for the first night or two, but soon it was her own bed again, cool and airy and virginal and exclusive, a bed in which one woke betimes and lay in a faint perfume of lavender drowsily listening to the sounds of morning—the clank of a milk-pail, the swish of a broom, the flapping of pigeons' wings.

Gabrielle untied her veils and took off her hat. Then she opened the doors of a big wardrobe of chestnut wood to search for an old frock. She found one of printed linen, a country frock too simple to appear dated. In this she stood before the cheval-glass which had been the first recognition accorded to the claims of grown-up vanity and had remained in this room ever since her eighteenth Noel.

"I really do not look more than twenty-seven in this frock," Gabrielle thought. "Yet in another three years when I shall be thirty-five a frock like this will make me look older than I am. If age's trap were just a net of lines how easily it could be avoided! But it is so mean and stealthy in the way it conquers. It spreads over a woman like a kind of fog. It deadens all the outlines without

softening them No, I have not more than three years to cling to what I was in my twenties Oh, yes, yes, I shall have to admit to thirty in another three years "

Any casual observer who had watched Gabrielle Derozier walking down the wide stairs of that sedate old house in the heart of France on that August day of the year 1912 would never have supposed that age's approach need cause her the slightest anxiety for a long while yet, and when she took her seat at the circular table in the dining-room the dim blue panels of the walls of which were picked out with tarnished gilt, she brought to the tempered light almost the ardour of the excluded sun itself Whether one regarded her wealth of reddish-brown hair the natural glory of which was enhanced by dark and slim and deliberately artificial eyebrows, or her large, luminous, somewhat prominent grey-green eyes as eager for the warmth of life as the parted lips of that generous mouth which escaped looseness by the definition of its graceful bow, or her neck the thickness of which proclaiming an excessive sensuality was forgotten in the snowy delicacy of its surface and seemed the only neck fit to rise from such a swan's breast, or her long pointed fingers ringed with emeralds, or her forearms in the smoothness of which the delicate blue veins appeared inlaid in an exquisite damascene, the impression on individual or audience was of a completely satisfying femininity

"*Alors,*" ejaculated old Monsieur Derozier, breaking off a large piece of one of those well-crustured, slightly sour French rolls which express the national character as once upon a time English bread could express the national character before the baking of it was rationalized to turn out a food fitter for gelded white rats than men "*Alors,* you will play in Paris this winter? I am glad to hear it," he went on, ladling into his mouth a spoonful of small crayfish caught early that morning in a swift-flowing

pebbled stream near Larnay "London in winter, *ah, mais non!*"

"London is quite as agreeable as Paris in winter, I assure you," his daughter declared

"Indeed yes," put in Madame Derozier "I remember spending a winter in London over fifty years ago and finding it not at all disagreeable, though of course I was a girl, and that makes a difference, André"

"A great difference," her husband guffawed amiably, and picked up a goblet of white burgundy for a mighty draught

Gabrielle marvelled at the volume of that laugh for an old man of seventy-five In that quiet dining-room scented with the peaches and pears and small golden-netted melons heaped in Sèvres dishes it seemed to ring out above the merriment of all the bygone vintages over which he had presided like Bacchus Bonhomme

"I had half made up my mind to go to America," she told her parents

Monsieur Derozier, who was now digging with horn spoon and fork into a great bowl of salad, shuddered To a man who had nuzzled for three-quarters of a century to the bosom of mother earth the fancy of those bleak and sterile Atlantic leagues between him and America was more appalling than any prospect in the Inferno

"*Oh, la, la!*" he exclaimed, relying like a good Frenchman upon the emphasis of his own voice, not upon the verbal force of the oath The most ingenious blasphemy, the most elaborate obscenity, could have added nothing to the strength of that infantile ejaculation

"One gains enough in New York," Gabrielle reminded her father

"One gains, yes," he agreed "But one loses more"

"There is always the pleasure of conquest," Gabrielle added "I am sure of Paris I have only to choose my parts carefully to be sure of London What actress

would not be curious to know how she will affect New York?"

"I always understood," Madame Deiozier put in, "that New York followed Paris as a matter of course. In fact I have never supposed that Americans possessed any judgment of their own, except naturally in money matters. Indeed, you were wise not to go."

But this was just what Gabrielle could not feel sure of, and when after *déjeuner* she retired to the tumbledown summerhouse which had been the refuge of her childish dreams and problems the question repeated itself more insistently. In an attempt to dismiss it from her mind now that she had taken the decision to remain in Europe, Gabrielle strolled across to pluck a jargonelle pear from that espalier forbidden to her in childhood by her father. She had asked at *déjeuner* for a pear when her father had offered her one of those small melons in the perfection of which he took such pride. She had been told there was not one jargonelle which had reached the very moment for gathering. Her father would never allow that anybody except himself was competent to judge when a pear or a melon was ready. Any fool could judge a peach. A pear for immediate eating required from the chooser a combination of intuitive genius and long experience in the possession of which he counted himself supreme in France. Looking back at her childhood, Gabrielle could recall nothing which had involved her in such disgrace with her father as those occasions when she had attempted to exercise private judgment in the choice of pears. Once when she had anticipated him by picking for herself the earliest Bon Chrétien of the year he had for the first and last time in her life chastised her. Such a sin could be expiated only by a whipping. And even now were she to be tempted by the plump gold of a Bon Chrétien pear she should lack the courage to yield.

Gabrielle reached the espalier on which were hanging

those slim 'green jargonelles' freaked by the sun with sullen rose, and as she stood regarding them the walls of the garden confronted her, once more as massive as a castle wall, and the gothic tower of the church of Saint Denis soared up to heaven as it had seemed to soar in childhood when it was so easy to fancy that the pigeons disturbed by the clangour of the striking clock were a flight of angels. The garden of the Deiozier house was indeed spacious, but of late years the surrounding buildings had seemed to encroach upon it more inquisitively than once upon a time when their presence had been a fortification against the huge and perhaps hostile world beyond. Now once more this garden was an inviolable enclosure, this garden in the heart of Larnay-Mozère, itself in the heart of the Lyonnais, itself in the heart of France. And who would deny that France was the heart of the world? Yes, she had been wise not to embark upon that American adventure. Europe was her secure background, and there was no more dangerous test of a man's love for a woman than to display herself against an unfamiliar background. Separation for six months was less dangerous. In the hustle and fret of America she would stand in his mind for the peace of Europe. She had talked to him so often of this garden that the perfume of ripening fruit in windless sunshine would haunt his nostalgia all the way over that grey ocean. *Mon dieu*, when she recalled the monstrousness of that Channel crossing, how could she have fancied even for an instant that she should have the courage to cross the Atlantic?

Gabrielle stroked and gently squeezed several of the slim green jargonelles with her slender fingers emerald-ringed, and when at last she had selected her victim she pressed a nail against the sappy stalk, thinking how much easier it was nowadays than once upon a time when the whole tree had seemed to resist the plundering of childish fingers. She retreated with the pear to the summerhouse,

and when she bit into its sweetness the faint methylic exhalation diffused upon the drouthy sinell of the old summerhouse conjured from the mingled scent her own childhood with such vividness that she was nearly on the alert for her father in his gardening blouse and wide-brimmed straw hat coming along the central path knife in hand, eyes glancing keenly to note if the faded zinnias had been duly removed from the long border, to select his own pears for the dessert at dinner. There was nobody. The garden blazed in solitude beyond this shadowy summerhouse. Two o'clock had struck. The pigeons in the church tower would drowse idly in the sun till they were fluttered by the chimes of three. Nothing moved except the butterflies—white butterflies that chased each other against the unbroken azure and great dark butterflies that floated down upon the rotting plums and sucked up the mushy sweetness of them, winking the while velvety fans in an ecstasy of greed. Now a lizard appeared on the rustic sill of the window to wait with upreared palpitating throat and jewelled eyes for a fly to alight within reach of his swift tongue.

Gabrielle had brought a blotting-pad and stylo to the summerhouse with the intention of writing a letter, but the taste of the jargonelle had overpowered the present with so many poignant souvenirs of the past that for a while she could not bring herself to spoil the mood of dreamy evocation into which it had drugged her. Besides, he would not reach New York for another month, and they had agreed she should not write to him until he reached his hotel. They had agreed how kindly the chill of a strange hotel would be warmed by a packet of her letters waiting for him there. 'And by that time,' he had told her, 'we shall be hardly two months away from being together again. The worst will be over.'

It was in this summerhouse that she and Marie Bœuf had come to exchange impressions after their first Com-

munion on that June Sunday twenty twenty-two years ago! There had been an argument with Françoise about dirtying their white dresses, but they had promised not to lean back and to put the cushions Françoise had given them on the seats of the chairs. All the children had had *dejeuner* with Monsieur Bœuf in the *mairie*, and the town band had played gay marches while they spooned up their bowls of *café au lait*, but she had been feeling so pious that she was longing all the while for the *dejeuner* to be finished so that she could confide in her friend how while she was kneeling in front of the altar she had received a heavenly assurance that *Nôtre Dame* would appear to her. She had been in a fever of holiness, and in no mood to listen to the jaunty tunes of the town band. And Marie had been deeply impressed when she told her about this revelation of the favour of *Nôtre Dame*. Larnay-Mozère was to become another Lourdes. They had chattered together about it so excitably that they had forgotten the warning of Françoise not to lean back and when they returned to the house both their dresses were smeared with green mould from the summerhouse. She must go over to Lyon and call on Marie who had been married these ten years to a prosperous silk-merchant and had three little boys, to the eldest of whom she was a sadly neglectful *marraine*. But that was Marie's fault for asking her when she had long given up expecting visions of *Nôtre Dame*, when indeed, to be candid, *Nôtre Dame* had receded into the *féerie* of youth, hardly more real now, alas, than *la belle au bois dormant*. Yet perhaps after this separation from him was over a more serious future might be contemplated. It was a mistake to be too careless of one's religious duties. Religion kept a woman young.

And it had been to this summerhouse that after seeing Bernhardt in Jules Barbier's *Jeanne d'Arc* she had retired with the only volume of plays she could find in the house

—a tattered edition of Racine—and on this rustic stage declaimed *Andromaque* and *Athalie* and *Phèdre* until she had satisfied herself her vocation in life was not to behold saintly visions but to be an actress. And it had been in this summerhouse that she had confided to Edmond Floriot her determination to become an actress. That was in the summer of 1900 after the Dreyfus case had put the country in a turmoil. Edmond had come to bid his parents farewell before sailing to the Pacific, and one evening he had walked with her in this garden and denounced the army of whose artillery he was a lieutenant. It seemed that all the ablest young Dreyfusards were being ordered out to service in the remotest territories of France, with the intention of depriving them of any possible military career in the future. Edmond, a grave young man with pince-nez, had paced up and down the sunny garden with her and held forth against the injustice of the clericals who controlled the army. A clique of ignoble Jesuits who were willing to sacrifice the honour and glory of France to superstition and priestly intrigue!

"Unless a young officer is for ever sprawling before an altar to attract the attention of his superiors he were as well to give up the army and take to commerce. What shall I do in Papeete or New Caledonia? In twenty years with luck I shall be a fat commandant in charge of an antediluvian gun, of no more importance to myself or anybody else than a rotten coconut. What an end to so many hopes!"

It had been with an idea of consoling poor Edmond that she had told him of her own difficulty in persuading her father to consent to her accepting a professional engagement, but Edmond had continued to lament the harm done by the clericals to the honour and glory of France, by which she had not been long in discovering he meant his own honour and glory. At the end of their promenade they had reached the summerhouse, where

with a magnificent gesture of tragedy she had rolled out that line from Racine

"Sans argent l'honneur n'est qu'une maladie,"

and immediately afterwards from La Fontaine

"Aucun chemin de fleurs ne conduit à la gloire"

Edmond had been astonished by the power of her elocution. He had taken off his pince-nez and blinked at her. Then for all the world like some young English actor trying to play the lover he had made a clumsy movement to embrace her. And with a laugh she had bid him bear in mind that he was not yet in Papeete. She must remember to ask old Monsieur Floriot where Edmond was now. His banishment to the Pacific had lasted a very short while. He was said to be rising rapidly in the army with the freemason influence behind him.

"But why do I occupy myself with Edmond Floriot this afternoon?" Gabrielle demanded aloud. She gave herself no answer, but sat sipping the heady sunshine as it brimmed over from the garden's goblet into the shade of this drouthy summerhouse.

"Ah, it was perhaps foolish to let him go without me to America," she murmured, and spreading a folio of blotting-paper upon the rusty iron table she began to write rapidly with a jade-green stylograph upon the crackling notepaper faintly lined.

Gabrielle Derozier had used a stylograph ever since one of her fellow-actresses had commented on the delicacy of her old-fashioned handwriting. She had been aware from the start of her career of the importance to an actress of being dateless. Her calligraphy might one day restore a decade she had stolen from time. She must be wary. Many actresses cultivated a script as amply rounded as their own bosoms, their words strung across the notepaper like washing on a line. Not for her the

script of a performing elephant Stylography might lack character, but it was a dateless script. So all the patience which good Sister Marie of the Annunciation had devoted to teaching Gabrielle Derozier how to write worthily of that angelic name of hers which made her such a favourite pupil was wasted.

Some seven months after Gabrielle Derozier sat down to write that letter in the warm heart of France, John Ogilvie, arranging his cabin on the promenade deck of the *Princess Sophia*, one of the smaller vessels of the North German Lloyd line bound for Naples from New York, put it with some thirty others into an attache-case, with the intention of reading through them all in the impersonal atmosphere of the Atlantic and arriving at a final decision about the problem of the future, which these seven months in America had seemed to complicate so much more elaborately than all the preceding seven years since he had gone down from the University.

As he paced the deck on the port side and watched that vast profile of a city slowly recede in the greyness of a morning early in March, the August morning when he and Julius Stern had first beheld it from the deck of the *Runic* came back to him.

"Did you expect it to be like this, Julius?"

"No, it's much better than anything I fancied from photographs."

"I wonder New York hasn't produced a Canaletto."

"Canaletto's perspective couldn't have tackled that. It would be like playing Strauss with a Haydn orchestra."

But the last words of Julius Stern that night, when they were walking through what seemed the unnatural, the positively frightening quietude of the corridor in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to their rooms, had been, 'Did I mention Strauss in the remote part of this morning?'

Stravinsky is the only one who comes near to it. In fact the *Fire Bird* might be an expression of the music of Broadway at night."

On this remark Julius had vanished into his bedroom, and there had been another twenty yards to walk to his own bedroom along that thick carpet under the eye of the floor-clerk sitting there at her table by the turn of the corridor opposite two mirrors which reflected the nocturnal traffic of this lofty tomb in which each transient abode for a while, as richly embalmed in luxury as some dead Pharaoh in his perfumed cerements. A shape of funereal menace that floor-clerk in her neat black dress, entering in that great book the hour of matutinal resurrection for the ghosts she tended, a shape portentous as one of those headless Fates from the pediment of the Parthenon, and not less significant than their marble draperies the folds of her neat black dress.

How glad Julius and he had been to see Rosenbeck waiting for them at the Customs when they disembarked from the *Runic*! The nearer the ship had drawn to the dock the more enviously they had eyed their fellow-passengers leaning over the side and waving to figures they fancied they could recognize ashore. During the voyage over the Atlantic these fellow-passengers in their check caps and canvas shoes, circling the ship for the benefit of their livers, had seemed hardly more individual than flies circling an electrolier in some great banquet-hall, but now their obvious familiarity with New York endowed each of them with a rich and surprising personality. Havre, Boulogne, Calais, Dieppe, Ostend, those were ports which admitted to a foreign country, but the sight of them had never suggested entering a country the strangeness of which could not at once be mastered by a few colloquial phrases in the language of that country. This arrival in New York was like passing from one plane of time to another. The first sight of that

tremendous profile had been a shock, and the nearer they came to the existence of which those battlements were the challenging proclamation, the more profoundly did they comprehend that this was in very fact not a fresh country but a new world

"I've always heard that Englishmen strike Americans as patronizing and superior," Julius had exclaimed "But obviously the poor devils had been scared into a rigid silence "

And then they had caught sight of Rosenbeck He might have been their uncle the way they had waved to him

In the previous autumn Rosenbeck had written to ask if John was prepared to discuss a musical version of his successful play *Annette* with a view to a production in America under the auspices of Patrick Joseph Kelly There had already been two attempts to negotiate a production in America, both of which John had turned down because Gabrielle had objected to the part's being played by any actress except herself When the moment came she would act in New York and she could think of no English play in which she would sooner appear than John's

"I would play a short season of perhaps a month—all French plays except yours, John dearest, but I could not play *Annette* after some American had murdered her *par avance* But of course you must think of yourself, my dear, and not allow my poor little ambitions to be in the way of your success "

And John who was in love with Gabrielle, not only because she was Gabrielle but because her performance of *Annette* had made his name as a dramatist, would naturally not hear of another *Annette* in America so long as Gabrielle fancied she might one day play the part there herself

However, the proposal to make a musical version of his

play was another matter, and to this Gabrielle raised no objection. Probably she never supposed the plan would materialize, for the author was not suggesting one of the famous Viennese composers of light opera for *Annette*, but a young friend of his own who though famous enough once as a boy violinist had had no experience of writing for the theatre.

So John received Rosenbeck in his diminutive house on Millbank, seeming more diminutive against the bone-white heaps of new offices rising all round and the immense gothic inanity of the Houses of Parliament. Rosenbeck with his padded shoulders and padded toes looked hardly real in John's small white-panelled sitting-room, and by the way he stared up at himself in the convex Dutch mirror over the mantelpiece Rosenbeck may have been thinking that this room was hardly real.

"Don't you find it difficult to stretch your legs?" pardon the liberty, Mr Ogilvie, but I get kind of cooped up in London. Oh, I like London a lot. I think your police and the way they handle the traffic are fine but it beats me how you ever wrote *Annette* in a room like this."

"I didn't," John put in. "I wrote it in Paris."

Rosenbeck looked relieved.

"Ah, that explains it."

"But as soon as it was a success I took this house."

"Oh, I'll admit you have a great view of the river, though that's a god-awful bridge for a city like London to stand for right under the eyes of its legislative assembly."

He jerked a nod toward the rusty ironwork of Lambeth Suspension Bridge on which the windows of the little house gazed.

"It is ugly," John agreed, "but no uglier than the Houses of Parliament themselves."

This remark cleared the atmosphere. As soon as

Rosenbeck found John was able to laugh. At the British Houses of Parliament he lost his embarrassment. He too had thought them the ugliest pile of stones he had ever seen, but he had always supposed British folk believed them to be the grandest building in the world, and to hear an Englishman speak out like that about them had done him good.

"And now let's talk business, Mr Ogilvie. You have a fine success in *Annette*. They tell me it'll run through till next summer easily. Now I know you've had one or two propositions already. There was talk of getting it for Billie Burke, but she's fitted right now, and anyway I understand Gabrielle Derozier wants to do it herself if it crosses the ocean. But this notion of P. J. Kelly to make a musical show of it won't interfere with that. He wants it for Adelaide Orme, and believe me, if we can get half as good a musical play out of *Annette* as the original now running at the Mercury Theatre, Adelaide Orme will make it as big a success in America as it is over here. She's crazy about the play. She saw it when she was over here in September, and Pat Kelly told me to find out what was doing. His notion was to buy the rights from you and have Greene Hewitt write the book and Onslow Masterman and perhaps one or two others write the lyrics, and he reckoned to see if he couldn't persuade Lehar."

"Nothing doing," said John firmly. "I'll write the libretto myself, and a composer I know called Julius Stern will have first chance to write the music."

"You've made up your mind?"

"Absolutely."

"That goes for me. I guess I know when a fellow has made up his mind. Go right ahead, Mr Ogilvie. All I ask is the first option on the complete work for Patrick Joseph Kelly, for which I'm prepared to put down five hundred dollars."

"You give me a libretto that's dramatic and not literary and I'll sail into it, but if I'm going to write the music first I'll write the words as well like Charpentier and call it a musical romance which was his name for *Louise*, and that wasn't so bad "

"Pretty dull, I thought," said John "The only thing I can remember in the whole opera is the old father telling the old mother to come and sit by the window because the view was much better since they pulled down the houses opposite And that made me shout with laughter True I heard *Louise* in English, and that's a mistake "

"Isn't *Annette* to be in English?"

"Yes, but I hope to dodge the ridiculous I vote against recitative Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West* was ruined by bad recitative, they tell me, and that was produced in New York only last year I'm in favour of spoken dialogue instead of recitative, with a soft accompaniment of incidental music and working up in the emotional climaxes for the music more or less to take charge of the words "

So John managed to tear himself away from the agreeable pastime of floating along on the stream of success in London and retired with Julius to Paris Here he was immediately seized with a longing for the company of Gabrielle This was all to the good for the libretto of *Annette*, for not only did it drive him to work his hardest in order to get back to London, but it also provided him with that thwarted emotion which feeds the vitality of a theme like *Annette* dealing of youth and unhappy love Julius was pleased with what he called John's *Trilbiata*

"But look here, there must be at least three honest-to-god tunes," was John's last injunction to Julius from the window of the Calais train when he left him to the music and hurried back to Gabrielle in London "One isn't enough," he shouted over a blue-bloused porter's head as the train began to move out of the station "Puccini found that out in *The Girl of the Golden West* "

And in the empty compartment as he arranged his luggage he shouted exultantly, '*Ch'ella mi creda libero e VICINO!*'

Rosenbeck came back from the United States in May Julius arrived from France with the score Miriam Stern played it through on the Steinway in the old drawing-room at Claremount Gardens The walls were ivory now instead of grey, and the sea-green velvet curtains had been replaced by curtains of orange damask Some of her slimness had ripened to stateliness, but at fifty Miriam appeared to John almost the same as she was when Emil first brought him to the house They had some time together that day before Julius and Rosenbeck arrived, because Julius had made up his mind that Rosenbeck would never find his way up to Hampstead without a guide, for it was against Rosenbeck's principles to take a taxi He recognized that London taxis were cheap, but nobody in New York ever dreamed of travelling uptown or downtown or crosstown except by trolley-car or subway or El unless he had his own automobile, and he preferred to lose himself in the maze of the Tube or find himself on an omnibus going in the wrong direction rather than sacrifice the New Yorker's hostility to the extortionate fares charged by his own taxis

"I wonder what Emil would think of our opera, though I believe we are to call it a musical romance with much emphasis on the 'ro'," John speculated "I haven't heard from him for some months, but I told you, didn't I, that after the success of *Annette* last autumn he wrote to tell me that so far as he could judge from the criticisms he had read it was exactly the kind of play with which he would have expected me to make a success"

"I wish he wouldn't be quite so superior," Miriam said, with a smile that turned to a sigh "I'm afraid he's growing a little tired of his work"

"I should think he was," declared John emphatically

"Could anything be more fantastic than such work for him? A fist in Greats and every University prize he wanted, and then instead of trying for a fellowship which he would certainly have got he decides to enter the Near Eastern Consular Service! Really, you know, Miriam, it was fantastic."

"He had his reasons."

"Oh, he had his reasons, no doubt. And now he's Vice-Consul at Mileto, with Italy at war with Turkey and the likelihood of a flare-up in the Balkans at any moment. The sooner he resigns the better. Otherwise he'll be caught up inextricably in the wheels of the bureaucratic machine. Well, he may despise Julius and myself as *amuseurs*, but at any rate we didn't resolve to turn the world upside down and become vice-consuls in the Levant to do it."

"I don't think somehow the bureaucratic machine will keep him."

"It has kept him all these years. I'll be thirty in October. Emil's twenty-eight."

"Do either of you find it so old as you thought you would find it ten years ago?"

"I certainly don't, but I should fancy official work in the Levant wasn't quite so conducive to keeping young as the excitement of" "he paused

"Of being a successful young dramatist very much in love with his leading lady," she suggested.

Then Rosenbeck and Julius arrived, and an attempt was made to give him a notion of the way the musical romance would sound. Julius had a voice like a crow and John could not stay in the same key for more than two or three notes, but between them, thanks chiefly to Miriam Stern's playing, Rosenbeck managed to discover that the musical romance would give Adelaide Orme three swell opportunities to shine with her stuff and the tenor one peach of a song.

"I'm going right back to Patrick Joseph Kelly and you'll have a cable as soon as he makes up his mind. If he agrees to produce he'll probably produce in the fall just after the Presidential election, and that will mean putting the play into rehearsal by the end of September. He's sure to want you both to come over because he always likes to have his authors around. Will you both come?"

"If he'll pay our travelling expenses," said John promptly.

"Say, you oughtn't to have been an author, Mr Ogilvie. You ought to have been an agent. You *like* asking for more. Well, I guess Mr Kelly will O.K. that arrangement if he decides to produce *Annette*."

Rosenbeck had guessed right, and that was why he had been at the quay to meet the *Runic* when she docked there on that August morning.

How glad they had been to see him, John recalled once more as the *Princess Sophia* moved slowly away from that tremendous profile. They who had laughed at his bewilderment a few yards away from the small part of London with which he was familiar now beheld him as a figure as substantially protective as one of those London policemen whose praises Rosenbeck had always sung with such enthusiasm. He was not wearing his lucent green fedora on this hot New York day, but his shoulders and toes seemed almost as conspicuously padded here as they had seemed in London.

"As soon as they've passed your heavy baggage we'll take your grips and drive right along to the Waldorf in a taxi."

"I thought you never took taxis in New York?" Julius said.

"Only to the dock. Don't you start going in taxis to

drive you a couple of blocks, or you'll return home poor even if *Annette* runs a year on Broadway "

During the first part of the drive to the hotel New York had not appeared so unfamiliar as they had expected. Those shabby houses with green shutters might have been a corner of Paris. Then all that which was half familiar had in a moment vanished. The effect had been of suddenly passing through to the world behind those battlements more fearful than the walls of Dis. Receding receding now. Lovely as a line of cloud in the greyness of this March morning that towering façade. Already the water round the ship was dancing. Already the tang of the Atlantic was sharp and salt upon the wide air.

That first night in New York Julius and himself wandering along Broadway, their heads in the air like two kids at a firework gala. Fountains of rubies and emeralds streaming incessantly over the face of every building. A mammoth kitten in electric light playing with a titanic ball of wool. Cascades of sapphires and topazes. Even the quoted opinions of dramatic critics rutilant above the doors of the theatres.

"Imagine quoting William Archer or A. B. Walkley in letters of fire. At such a sight all the stars might well hide their diminished heads."

"Damned awful," Julius had muttered. "Electricity must be cheap to make clichés scintillate. Or else this nation is more susceptible to advertised opinion than any civilised nation should be. Hullo, here's a cinema theatre. Let's sample it. If they're as far ahead of us in films as they seem to be in the other developments of urban existence we should see something good."

So they had passed in to find a miserable little narrow barrack with tip-up seats set too close, badly upholstered, and covered with mangy plush. On the screen was a representation of wild life in Africa which was as badly lighted as a wet November afternoon at the London Zoo.

toward closing time They had stayed but a few minutes when they found they could not smoke during the wobbly representation which, without even the accompaniment of a cracked piano, was unfolding itself to a sparse audience with a tick-tick of intolerable melancholy

They had wandered out into the warm night again, and at last they had found themselves in Madison Square, overwhelmed by the wonder of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Building with its great green illuminated clock turning to red at the hour

"Nothing ever gave me such a sense of time passing God, it's marvellous!" Julius had exclaimed "Why can't we live up in that concrete tower?"

They had sat down on a bench to pore upon this shape with which they could compare nothing in their experience of architecture The beauty of it, they had decided, lay in its perfect expression of a child's aspiration Give a child all the bricks in the world with the power to command labour and he would produce a tower like this They discussed seriously the possibility of living on the top storey below the conical roof Europe was seeming sterile and remote in the fecundity of the impressions with which New York was making their brains teem

"I'm twenty-six, you're twenty-nine," Julius had said "Don't you feel as excited as you did when ideas used to come to you when you were seventeen?"

And he had replied that he felt more excited, because he had a chance of knocking such ideas into shape now when they did not melt away like last night's dream

"The music, the music I can hear in this city!" Julius had exclaimed "And up there at the top of that tower I should still hear it, but be far enough above it to write it down"

"I can't think why this country hasn't produced greater novelists and dramatists and poets"

"Or composers," added Julius.

"I suppose it has only discovered its profound independence of the old world too recently. I should think those who are children now will give us something in another twenty years under the influence of that kind of thing." He had pointed to the tower. "It's ridiculous you and I should have thought of America in terms of Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne and Emerson and Longfellow and Walt Whitman when we can sit here staggered by this seven-hundred-feet high child's tower. And we mustn't forget that New York is only a minute fraction of the United States. You remember the way half the passengers on the *Runic* used to impress that on us? We were not to suppose New York typical. No, no, no! We were to visit all their home towns before we could flatter ourselves we knew anything about the United States. Nevertheless, I don't believe you can have a city like New York which is merely the cosmopolitan accident we were asked to believe it was. The spirit of a nation broods over it."

"I should prefer to say that the spirit of a nation was surging under it."

"That's hardly more than a verbal distinction. The point is you don't believe that New York is eccentric?"

"Not in the least," Julius had replied. "So far from thinking it that I am willing to believe in the likelihood of New York's being the first expression of a worldwide urban development, even of a new phase of humanity."

"Yes, there is an exquisite sense of freedom from the past here," he had agreed. "I don't care a hang about the future, with this feeling I have of the present pulsating through me. It's like being drunk on good champagne. To hell with the past and the future! I'm sure the only atmosphere for the artist is this pulsating present."

"Yes, but we *are* artists and we have to try to preserve this present in words or music. And how are we going to

do that when it pulsates so strongly that all our energy is consumed in responding to it?"

"We must store it up in batteries like a power-engine. Let me keep the impression of this first twelve hours in New York so that when I am seventy I can touch a switch and be sitting here again with you looking up at that green glowing clock and see it flash to red as it is flashing now for this superlative midnight. I'm beginning now to understand what Marinetti was driving at when he made a flamboyant speech last year to a literary club in London. I thought his futurism was nothing but the blague of a mountebank. In fact during the discussion afterwards I improvised a futuristic poem about the Piccadilly Tube, discovering an expressionist significance in the various colours of the tiles which mark the different stations from Finsbury Park to Gloucester Road to show how easily it could be done. Maurice Hewlett was in the chair, wearing the correct evening dress of the Keeper of the Crown Records, but the sockless sandals of the author of *The Forest Lovers*—as astonishing a sartorial effect as I ever saw.

"His mediæval sense of hospitality was rather offended by what he considered discourtesy to a guest, and he sent word to me by the secretary that I must apologize to Marinetti for my parody. The message reached me just as Marinetti himself was congratulating me on the way in which I, a young writer, had been the only one in that crowd of *passants* to understand what he meant. And now in New York I really am beginning to understand him and believe that his intoxicated enjoyment of the present is a genuine exultation of the mind. It's bad enough to be a dramatist in a country which produced Shakespeare, but imagine being a painter in Italy!"

"Or a composer in Germany," Julius had added. "The more I think of it the greater my admiration for Wagner. And now he has overlaid German music more heavily

than all his predecessors put together. Look at Bruckner and Mahler! Two honest-to-god genuine artists utterly devitalized by the domination of Wagnerianism."

"The future of art should be in America."

"It should be," Julius had assented. "That is, if there is a future of art. Life may become such an overwhelming present that art will become a mere escape from life, and I don't believe that's art at all. I shall get my beard taken off to-morrow."

"Why?"

"Because a beard looks wrong with this architecture. I realize now why Americans started a general fashion of being clean-shaven when most Europeans were still cultivating various kinds of hair on the face."

Rosenbeck was delighted with Julius's appearance after the operation, and for the barber-shop of the Waldorf-Astoria operation was not too large a word, such an atmosphere of the hospital-theatre did it evoke.

While Julius's beard was being removed, he himself had kept him company by having what he intended to be no more than a shave and a shampoo, but when he was lying in that horizontal chair, the like of which he had never seen in a European hairdressing establishment, he had weakly assented to everything the barber suggested, ending up with the torture of the hot towel.

Oddly enough the removal of the beard made Julius look older, perhaps because the set of his square chin was now visible and there was no hair to weaken the effect of those thick black eyebrows and that full determined mouth.

They had asked Rosenbeck about the possibility of living at the top of the Metropolitan Tower.

He had tapped his forehead.

"You're crazy. That's for offices. That's not an apartment-house. And if you're not crazy now, you soon would be, swinging up there in the wind in the middle of the

night Cut it out If you decide to settle down in New York we'll find you an apartment looking out over Central Park or up on Riverside Drive with a crackerjack view of the Palisades But the Metropolitan Tower? No, sir! Anyhow, P J K has 'phoned along to have you go right out and be his guests in the country And when you come back to New York I've reserved rooms for you in the Picardy Hotel, West 46th Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue Pat Kelly wants you to change one or two scenes here and there before he puts *Annette* into rehearsal "

The two authors had not thought when they heard Rosenbeck make this announcement so lightly that the next two months of their stay would be preoccupied with changing scenes here and there amid the distracting excitement of New York work and play

Nor had they thought that one of them would return to Europe alone in the following year and that the other would wave him farewell from a pier at Hoboken and turn away from the sight of the *Princess Sophia* bound for Naples feeling her way out to sea to drive back in a luxurious Hupmobile with a rich young wife to a luxurious apartment overlooking West Central Park

Further retrospection was interrupted by a pleasant voice at John's elbow

"We seem like having a quiet start for our trip over "

John turned round to see a good-looking young American of about his own age dressed in a light tweed suit which had the air of heralding the warmer airs for which they were bound

"And if we get through the first three days with this kind of weather we ought to have fair-weather sailing all the way to Madeira I'll be glad to feel the sun again.

I'm a Southerner who spends most of his time in Italy, and these New York winters get me down "

"Last winter was a bit trying," John agreed

"Ah, I thought you were British," said the other with a smile

They chatted for a little in the usual style of people striking up an acquaintance on board ship until the stranger said he must go and see if his wife needed any help in the cabin

"We've been showing off our large-size son and heir aged two years and one month to all our relations and friends, and now we're going back to our villa in Citrano on the coast about half-way between Sorrento and Amalfi I'd like you to meet Mrs Langridge Won't you join us at cocktail time in the smoke-room?"

They exchanged cards

*Wacey Langridge,
Villa Allegra, Citrano*

"John Ogilvie?" Langridge repeated "Wait a moment, that name is kind of familiar Why, I know! Didn't you write a play which was coming to New York last fall and never arrived on Broadway?"

"That's right "

"What happened?"

"Too long a story to tell now "

"Sure Well, we'll be seeing you around about six in the smoke-room Till then "

John was inclined to kick himself for having pledged himself so rashly to one of those steamer friendships Langridge's wife might be thoroughly tiresome, and the prospect of tagging around for twelve days with a young married couple doting on their first infant was not so good He had designed to make this leisurely voyage a serious piece of retrospective stock-taking He wanted to land in Europe again with a mind clear about the future

He turned away rather irritably from the receding view of New York to go along to his cabin for the attaché-case in which he had put Gabrielle's letters. He had noticed a small wind-shelter aft in which he might hope to sit secluded. Oh lord, there was the bugle for lunch! Better get that over. When John found himself at a small table with three other men his unsociable resolutions broke down. Before the meal was half over his three companions might have been his intimate friends since he first went to school. That all three of them were Americans made anything except the greatest cordiality particularly difficult.

"Say, there's a handsome girl!" exclaimed Mewburn, one of those doughy New Yorkers who look as if they had been fed exclusively on marsh-mallows from infancy.

John glanced across the saloon and saw a tall and slender young woman with wavy rich brown hair and a red rose complexion making her way across the saloon on the far side. Behind her was Langridge. John was no longer sorry he had accepted that invitation to cocktails before dinner.

"I reckon you'll see a higher percentage of really good-looking women in the United States than anywhere else in the world," declared Apthorpe, who was hatchet-faced and as lean as Mewburn was fat. Apthorpe did not deliver this estimate in any spirit of aggressive patriotism. He was a statistician.

The assertion was taken up by Garroni who was of Italian extraction and making his biennial visit to the land of his fathers.

"Well, I wouldn't like to contradict you, Mr Apthorpe. But I believe after you've visited Italy you'll allow a high percentage of good-looking women to Italy."

"I'll make a note of that," said the statistician. "And after I've investigated the matter, Mr Garroni, I'll mail you my estimated comparative percentage."

"And what 'ud we do without women?" asked Mewburn rhetorically "I guess we'd be pretty miserable without 'em Yes, sir, life would be no kind of a life at all without women But say, Mr Ogilvie, what are your women in England up to now?"

"You mean the suffragettes?"

"We think they're terrible We consider in America that our women rule the country We American men have a very high ideal of our glorious American womanhood, and a darned low opinion of our politicians, though I believe under President Wilson we shall see a clean-up all round I never voted for a Democratic candidate before, but I voted Democrat this time And that brings me back to the power of our women Mrs Mewburn asked me who was getting my vote 'Why,' I said, 'I've always voted Republican' 'I know you have,' she said, 'but I like Governor Wilson's face, and I think you ought to give him your vote' 'Why, honey,' I said, 'I never heard you express an opinion on politics before, but if you feel like that I'll give Governor Wilson my vote' There you are, Mr Ogilvie Isn't that a better way of influencing the opinion of the country than kicking one of the new traffic cops in the pants like a crazy suffragette would?"

"They'll never get what they want in England without violence," said John "No Englishman believes you're in earnest till you kick him in the pants You fellows surely ought to know that Where would the United States be to-day if George Washington hadn't kicked George III in the pants?"

"That's true, Mr Mewburn," Garroni put in "And I guess that goes everywhere There'd be no United Italy to-day without some darned hard kicks in the pants"

"I haven't gone into the statistics of political changes effected by violence," Apthorpe put in "That gives me

a line of investigation which I'll examine as soon as I can assemble a few facts and figures "

Mewburn shook his head

"If we allow that men have to use force under exceptional provocation, that doesn't say women ought to imitate them. We've put woman on a pedestal. I respect women, Mr Ogilvie, but I can't respect a woman who unsexes herself the way these suffragettes do—smashing the windows of big stores, and worse "

"There would be no violence if our politicians would realize that if women want the vote they are entitled to have it "

"But do they? "

"That can only be discovered by giving it to them "

"Then do you approve of these suffragettes, Mr Ogilvie? "

"I think some of their actions are extravagant and some even positively repulsive, but the blame for that rests on our politicians "

"Well, I told you what we think about politicians in America," put in Mewburn

"It is clear the only way women can successfully wage war against man is by denying him sexually," John replied. "But I'm afraid I don't put woman on a pedestal and so I know that however much a few women may want the vote the great majority want men more "

"I should worry!" Garroni agreed

"Therefore such a method of warfare will produce too many blacklegs to make it effective," John argued. "Hence the undignified and pathetic and, if you like, rather shocking attempts to fight man with physical violence. I repeat, however, that the blame and the shame rest upon the men who drive them to it. And remember, Mr Mewburn, the only reason which prevents this Liberal Government of ours from bringing in a woman's suffrage Bill is a fear that the majority of women

will vote Conservative. When the Conservatives come into power again they will be equally afraid of such a Bill in case of helping their political opponents. You can see that clearly in the fact that the chief support for woman's suffrage is among the Labour Members who are a small minority and so willing to take a chance either way. And surely, Mr Mewburn, if women are worthy of being put on a pedestal that is an argument in favour of giving them the vote. Politics will hardly be damaged by introducing such an ennobling influence."

"It would put women on an equality with us."

"Instead of being superior morally and inferior mentally?" John pressed. "The world is moving on, Mr Mewburn, and I don't see how the increasing complications of modern existence will ever be unravelled unless men and women confront them as equals. Besides, women are realists, and we want realism in politics. Otherwise we shall have an appalling smash-up in the near future."

"What kind of a smash-up?" Garroni asked anxiously.

"War. You don't think this Balkan war is going to bring peace to Europe? And you don't think, if these criminal lunatics who are now trying to ruin the last chance of settling matters in Ireland are successful, we shall avoid civil war in Ireland? And that must mean war in Europe."

"How do you work that out, Mr Ogilvie?" asked the statistician.

"Because civil war in Great Britain would give Germany a free hand in Europe. And do you think Germany would lose the opportunity? No, sir. Then when France and Russia were knocked out as they certainly would be, Great Britain safely united by the Conservative Party would have to fight Germany alone."

"Not alone," declared Mewburn solemnly. "I tell you, Mr Ogilvie, the American people would never stand for that. Blood is thicker than water."

"The blood has run rather thin during the last hundred years," said John. "I wouldn't care to count on American help. Why should America come to the help of England merely because the two countries speak a rather similar language? I didn't travel very far during my months in America, but I travelled enough to realize that I was in a new world, and I learnt more about the future during these months than I'd learnt travelling in Europe during the previous twelve years. I assure you, Mr Mewburn, there's much more difference between the sum total of American and English opinion than there is between the sum total of English and German, or English and French, or English and Italian opinion."

"The sum total of opinion," observed Apthorpe with relish. "Now that's a mighty interesting speculation. That's given me a really good line to work on. I'd had in mind to devote my trip to Europe to the statistics of food and drink in relation to the climatic conditions in the several countries I'm proposing to visit, winding up with England next August. But the sum total of carefully differentiated opinion, that's a bigger proposition altogether."

"How many languages do you speak?" Garroni asked.

"Why, I know 'comment vous portez-vous' and 'heiss wasser, bitte,' and 'grazie tante,' and that sort of thing."

"They wouldn't get you far along on the road to the sum total of opinion," Garroni objected.

"Oh, we statisticians don't do the enquiries direct. We engage research experts and make a synthesis of all the information available. And anyway this is a big proposition, which can't be carried out in a hurry. If I decide to take it up seriously I'll have to obtain information from every state in the Union, and from every county in Europe. This is the kind of investigation a man like me takes up and then finds he has set himself a task for

life The Sum Total of Opinion Throughout the World differentiated and estimated by James Warner Apthorpe, with diagrams and statistical tables That sounds mighty like a life work "

There was a quiver through the saloon, and the glasses on the table chinked faintly

"Say, we aren't running into a swell, are we?" asked Garroni anxiously Birth in the new world had not freed him from a Latin inclination to sea-sickness

"Steward, bring four glasses of brandy," said Mewburn "These drinks are on me, gentlemen Well," he proclaimed when the brandy arrived, "I've listened to all you've had to say, but I don't believe in giving women votes and I don't believe in Socialism and I don't believe if Britain went to war with Germany the United States would stand aside and do nothing about it No, sir, Old Glory would wave beside the Union Jack Happy times, and drink hearty "

He raised his glass

The slight swell that the *Princess Sophia* encountered when she reached the ocean was enough to keep most of the passengers discreetly horizontal, and John found no competitors for the wind-shelter aft into which the early March sun was shining through the windows with an encouraging warmth He took out the packet of Gabrielle's letters written in her own unidiomatic English with occasional outbursts into French, but always in the same upright, legible, and utterly unemotional stylography

I have been telling to myself, mon bien aimé, that I am quite a large fool to permit that you go to America before I come with you It seemed so easy when you left Paris to Cherbourg, but as soon as the train was gone I

felt myself utterly desolée So altogether in a hurry I have come here by auto to my dear Larnay-Mozère and I write you these words in my own little pavillon which since I am a child has been the place of my dreams

That very long first letter had reached him on the day when Adelaide Orme had arrived at the Kelly country house to hear something of the part she was to play in the new musical romance. What a contrast she had offered to Gabrielle! Gabrielle had her starry moments, but from the instant she read through the script of *Annette* the play had been the thing. Never once at a rehearsal had she suggested cutting a line from somebody else's part to the advantage of her own, nor ever once tried to manipulate the grouping on the stage for herself to face the audience at the expense of her fellow-players. Whereas Adelaide Orme, with her lovely soprano voice and supple figure and beautiful face, had been perpetually jealous of so much as a piece of stage furniture which in her opinion might detract for an instant from any of her three graces. Adelaide Orme's preoccupation with her personal effect had always been so profound that as a result of it her voice sounded inhuman, her figure seemed brittle, and her face as conventional as a touched-up photograph.

"Mr Stern, I like very very much the three arias you have given me, but I want to be perfectly frank with you, because, you know, I'm famous for my frankness, and I want to tell you right now that the aria you have written for the tenor—what's his name—oh yes, Carruthers kind of difficult to say, isn't it? couldn't you change that name, Mr Ogilvie? Carruthers, Carruthers I feel it sort of doesn't come off the tongue. I mean after all we must think of the emotional force even of a name you see what I mean, Mr Kelly?"

And Pat Kelly had pushed his half-eaten cigar into the extreme left-hand corner of his wide aggressive mouth and opened wider his light blue combative eyes in that flat fair face of his, from which thirty years of ruthless management and hard drinking and wild gambling had not succeeded in scraping all the bloom of what in youth must have been a brilliant complexion

"Go on, Miss Orme Say just what you feel We're all set for a big success on Broadway, and you'll find Mr Ogilvie and Mr Stern willing to help all they can"

"That's terribly good news to hear, Mr Kelly And so I'll be just as frank as I always am and say I think this air for the tenor in the third act cuts all Annette's best songs right out of it Now I don't want to suggest that Caruthers well, I certainly do not like that name couldn't he be Carton or Carlton? those are perfectly good British names, aren't they? Of course I fully understand that for Annette's sake he must have a good aria in the third act but I don't know, I was wondering if Annette couldn't have this tune set to a special number written in for her when she's looking out of the window in the first act and dreaming about her home in Paris I'm sure Mr Ogilvie could write splendid words for such a number and I'm sure Mr Stern could write another good aria for the tenor in the third act You see, I'm an artist—an actress anyway, and I think that the actor or actress can often realize the way a scene will appear to an audience better than the author or composer"

An artist! That self-preoccupied length of well-tended human flesh an artist!

But when she had gone Kelly had impressed on them the vital necessity of satisfying Adelaide Orme Chewing fiercely at his cigar, he had tried to explain the American stellar system to his two authors They must have listened to him with countenances as incredulous as those of a

couple of die-hard fundamentalist Roman prelates listening to Galileo

"The American public don't pay to see a play," Kelly laid down "The American public pays to see a star actor or star actress in a play which shows them off at their best in the way an audience expects from them. Personality value. That's what we aim to put across. When you were walking on Broadway and looking at the sky-signs, which carried the biggest lettering, the play or the player?"

"The player every time."

"Sure it did. Then after the player the play, and after the play what Alan O'Dale or one of the star critics thought about it. The author doesn't count over here. And why? The public can never be sure of an author. One moment he'll give 'em a play which brings them out of their seats and the next minute he'll give 'em some highbrow stuff that makes 'em want to crawl under the seats and chew up the program to forget it. You may think I've been pulling your work about too much, but if I pull it about it's only because I want you to have a Broadway run. And the way to that run is to give Adelaide Orme what Adelaide Orme wants. It's she who'll make *Annette*. That's why I'm paying her a thousand dollars a week, and don't you boys think she isn't interested in your play. She's tickled to death by it. I know from one of my spies in the Syndicate, but she doesn't know I know, that Klaw and Erlanger offered her twelve hundred dollars to star in their next musical production. And there was nothing doing with Adelaide. She has a big public in this country, and you've got to keep her interested. So if she wants that song for herself in the first act, give it to her. What I like about you two is that you can both move faster than the usual British author. Ask him to change a scene and he'll look at you as if you'd asked him to change his clothes at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue.

And if she don't like the name Carruthers for the leading man because it ties her tongue in knots, hell, give her another name Do you get me?"

"I get you, Steve," Julius had replied, for he was collecting neat Americanisms as once upon a time he had collected butterflies, and he enjoyed showing them off

"But, Mr Kelly," he himself had asked, "if there is such brightness in a starry name why don't your American film-producers take advantage of it?"

"The movies?" P J Kelly had ejaculated, biting an extra large lump off the end of his cigar in contemptuous indignation "What do the movies know about showmanship? Nix Still, even they are beginning to find out what personality value means, and they're featuring now a young actress called Mary Pickford under her own name She's with the Biograph company"

"That must be the pretty girl we see in London in so many American films And there's a great fat fellow they call Bunny, but I don't suppose it's his real name"

"Sure, it's his real name He acted under my management for years on the road But the movies!" Kelly had removed from his mouth what was left of the cigar, thrown it in the large open grate of rough stone blocks which assured him that he was living in rustic seclusion, and chewed an inch off a fresh cigar before he continued "When the moving pictures begin to move in honest-to-god earnest, Patrick J Kelly will move with them"

John picked up Gabrielle's second letter

I wish, my dear, you were here now The vintage has begun, and my wonderful old father is so very happy There is such a moon I can see from the window of my room which is quite the room of a jeune fille tout à fait bien élevée, but alas, my dear, I am not at all thinking the thoughts which a jeune fille bien élevée must be thinking, for I am wanting to be with you in this soft

golden moonlight, and I am whispering to you, John, across that abominable Atlantic 'Do you love me more than ever?' It seemed to me that your first letter was perhaps a little cold. Of course you were so much occupied, I know, with the fatigues and ennui of that journey across the sea, and therefore I must be patient for your next letter. It is true that I have said to you to go and you have thought perhaps that I was a little tired of our love. I will confess you now that it has been in my mind to be separated for a little while. *Je suis tellement artiste*. All the men in my life have been put second to my art. And I was a little frightened when I found myself sometimes forgetting to put you second. But now when you are away I remember that night after we had such a grand success, you and I, and when you took me in your arms without any pretty little words quite suddenly and I was yours. And afterwards you said it did not matter if we had never made love, because when a woman had expressed so completely the dreams of a writer it was the same as to make love one to the other. And so true that is, dear, dear John. But when I found myself depending always on your company I began to fear for my liberty as an *artiste* and say to myself how foolish to let myself become like that. Quite altogether mad really. If perhaps I could always act in your plays, but that cannot be, because you can only sometimes write a part in an English play which will be for me. That was how I thought, but now I wonder if I care so much about art. But we shall talk about all this when you come back to Europe. Ah, how I wish for you in this September sunshine and moonlight. When the vintage is gathered we shall have a vintage feast. You would not know me here, John. I wear only such old clothes and forget all about the stage. I did not even bring Victorine. This moonlight, this moonlight, where are you, John?

He had been in Albany with Kelly who was trying out a drama he expected to put on in New York presently Julius had remained behind in the synthetic rusticity of Kelly's country residence in order to tackle the musical alterations entailed by Adelaide Orme's criticism. Kelly and himself had stayed at the Ten Eyck Hotel which if somewhat self-consciously Early Colonial in its style of decoration was comfortable even although the preceding occupant of his room, whether male or female, had left discarded blobs of chewing-gum like rose-tinted putty affixed to the underneath of most of the articles of furniture. The theatre was a great barn of a place with what he had thought a most unresponsive audience. When he had commented on this to Kelly, Kelly had replied that half of them were German immigrants who went to the theatre to improve their English. It was apparently a good test of a play, because it was believed that if a play could make the very slightest impression on Albany its future on Broadway was assured.

"And I never saw an Albany audience so worked up as the audience to-night at the curtain of the third act when the wife locks her door against her husband and he starts beating at it with the poker. Yes, that went big," Kelly had exclaimed, an expression of dreamy gratification softening his combative eyes to an almost milky blue. "Sex! That's what they want. But would I let Mrs Kelly go to a play like that? Not on your life."

He had thought for a moment that P. J. K. was afraid of the scene's putting ideas into the head of plump and kindly Mrs Kelly and of his being driven to take a poker to their own bedroom-door. But that was not the reason.

"I give the public sexy stuff because I gotta give it to 'em, but that doesn't say I gotta give sexy stuff to my wife and daughters. I may go on a fierce bat once in a while and carry around a pretty heavy jag, but I respect the women of my family and if I'm so soused I can't look 'em

in the face at home I don't go home at all I've been on the bat for a month with three big successes running on Broadway and everyone going nuts and asking where in hell I was because they wanted me to sign checks But would I let Mrs Kelly and Norah and Kathleen see me like that? 'I will say this for you, Mr Kelly,' said Father Rooney, that's our priest, 'you don't make an exhibition of yourself' 'Like hell, I don't, Father I have a good wife, and I hope I'll always remember it' " With this reminiscence Kelly pulled out from his waistcoat pocket a small packet of tissue paper, which he laid on the table "Unwrap that, Ogilvie "

He had unwrapped the tissue paper and found half a dozen diamonds

"Do you get it?" Kelly asked "I always travel around with a packet like that in my vest pocket, and when I've been on a big bat the first thing I do after I've had a shave is ask Mrs Kelly to choose a couple She's very fond of diamonds, and I reckon she has as good a collection as any woman in town by now You've never been married yet?"

"Not yet "

"And you've never seen a ball-game?"

"Not yet "

"Well, that's two good experiences waiting for you which you'll enjoy I bought the Pennsylvania Giants ball-ground this morning It stood me in for 250,000 dollars "

"Some buying!"

"But I sold it this afternoon for 275,000 dollars I don't know I had a hunch the deal would show a profit, but it might have gone the other way just as easily, and it wouldn't have suited me to put down 250,000 dollars just now I'd have unloaded again for 225,000 But I was in luck And I've a success with this play you saw to-night And in November I'm putting on that big Drury Lane

melodrama And if you and Stern can keep Adelaide Orme happy we'll have another success with *Annette* Let's go eat some oysters I got the author of this play to-night coming to supper and I want him to make a few little changes so as we can get them into rehearsal by Wednesday at latest "

I will leave for Paris to-morrow Comille Varenne has written to offer me the leading part in his new play He will not tell me what it is about until I will see him But it seems to be something quite out of the ordinary and I feel gloriously excited I am altogether rominee by this villegiature It missed only you to make it perfect I have all the time talked English to maman, and my poor father has been so furious because he could never understand what we were talking about, and he finds the sound of English so mesome He calls it a language for serpents Yes, yes, yes, toujours yes, yes, yes! And when he finds us talking together he will always say, 'Ah, voilà les deux siffieuses' We have laughed so much at him, but he is such a darling, and maman is really very happy to be talking English I could not be quite sure from that last letter if you are really enjoying New York, or if you are enjoying it like a little boy who has been to visit a Grande Exposition Universelle You say that you would enjoy it much more if I could be with you But I ask myself if that is true Do not think I am being difficile I know you want to think you would enjoy it more if I were with you but perhaps I feel that just at this moment it would not make such a lot of difference Am I right, John? I do so want to be wrong

That letter had reached him just after he and Julius had taken up their quarters in the Picardy Hotel, which was a comfortable enough place with a large new bar decorated

in the latest style, the resort of numerous English actors and cheery American commercial travellers. It was not a skyscraper by New York standards. Their rooms on the eleventh storey were not far from the top. When they began to use their letters of introduction and meet various people who were not connected in any way with the theatrical world they found that their address created a mild surprise in quiet old brownstone houses on Madison Avenue or Washington Square or the East Sixties. To such people it seemed that the Holland House was the only possible abode for a pair of young bachelors making a fairly long stay in New York.

"I think I'm rather glad there are still as many agreeable slightly stuffy people left in this large city as there are in London," Julius had observed once. "You know, they are a relief. Visiting them is like switching off a bright electric light."

"But even they telephone to one at nine o'clock in the morning," he had replied. "They don't do that in London."

"Ah, but it doesn't take two days for a letter to go from one part of London to the other. Besides, the telephone service is efficient here. No doubt, twenty years hence it will be almost as efficient in London. At present telephoning in London is like arguing about an old phonograph cylinder with a half-witted waitress."

There recurred to him now the figure of the telephone-operator at the Picardy, a thin girl whose delicate features by the end of the day used to seem almost transparent with fatigue. Hour after hour just off that crowded restless entrance lobby. Hour after hour in that steam-heated atmosphere which seemed to offer a solid resistance to one's progress when one came into it suddenly through the revolving-doors from the exhilarating Manhattan air. Hour after hour with earphones in front of a board covered with innumerable plugs and buttons. Yet always

chic, always courteous, always accurate, always serene. For a day or two a second enquiry once or twice about the number and exchange wanted, but after that never a moment's hesitation in following what one of his interviewers had called the thickest British accent ever heard on Broadway. Looking back at it all now, John found this telephone-operator standing out in his memory as the incarnation of the spirit of New York. She had the same quality as the architecture, at once practical, austere, exact, and strangely ethereal. He had never spoken to her except in consultation about a number or exchange until one evening about six o'clock on the last day of the year. 'You're looking a little tired,' he had told her abruptly. And she had turned to him with a quick smile away from that board with its polychrome of innumerable buttons and plugs, 'Why, I'm feeling just a little tired this evening, Mr Ogilvie.' No more than that, but he had divined that by admitting so much she had honoured him with an exceptionally intimate confidence and he had felt proud of her goodwill. He had been anxious to make her a present before he left the Picardy, but he had not done so on account of Julius's fantastic adventure with Coralie, the manicure-girl, in case she should have heard of it and suppose that he was looking for a similar adventure with herself. Oh, he would have enjoyed such an adventure, but he would have hated to run the risk of appearing contemptibly the average insensitive acquisitive male. When he reached Italy he would send her a souvenir of his gratitude.

Yes, that had been a fantastic adventure of Julius, and a fantastic revelation of what New York life might contain. Neither he nor Julius had had the slightest idea that Coralie was interested in anything but teasing that pretty young English musical comedy actor—Courtenay something-or-other—who spent all his time sitting up at the bar and making sheep's eyes at the little red-haired mani-

cure girl in her snowy white overall The barman, who took a paternal interest in all that went on in his purlieus, used to wink at them as he swizzled for them the golden or silver fizz they could never decide which they liked better

"Man lives on hope," he would murmur with a grin

And then one evening when he himself was dining out Julius had announced that Coralie had asked him to take her out to dinner

"Poor Courtenay won't be very pleased "

"She has no use for that Diesden shepherd Besides, he'll be doing his song and dance at the theatre "

They had gone down in the elevator together, and the boy who worked it, an observant youth, had remarked on the fact that he was in evening dress but not his friend 'Say, how come you to have your white bosom on, Mr Ogilvie, and Mr Stern not? Aren't you both going out together?'

Julius was meeting Coralie at the corner of 48th Street and Broadway, and he himself had gone to dine with the Blakistons in Fifth Avenue When he got back to the hotel Julius had not returned, and after a rather overwhelming evening of bright conversation, bright orchids, bright silver, and heavy English footmen in grey plush he had flung up the window of their sitting-room to drink in some fresh air When he had been sitting by it for about half an hour a police-waggon had driven up to a house opposite and a number of cops had broken in the door with axes, emerging presently with a quantity of tables and chairs which they loaded on the waggon Apparently the gambling-saloon had been warned, for they made no arrests and presently drove off In London such an incident about one o'clock in the morning would have drawn a handsome crowd In New York the passers-by hardly bothered to turn their heads Yet an English friend of theirs who had walked down Broadway with them,

wearing a monocle, had caused a traffic jam on the sidewalk, and they had had to warn him that either he must buy a pair of horn-rimmed glasses or they would refuse to be seen out with him in future

Thinking of the New York night as he sat here in this sun-pailour of the *Princess Sophia*, John had a brief emotion of nostalgia. At this moment he would have been glad to hear the newsboys about two in the morning calling the day's papers 'New York Woyle! Joynal! New York Joynal! Woyle!' No city gave such an impression of the night rushing on to meet the morrow as New York. No night was so tense and vital. And as material progress rushed on, would not night everywhere acquire this tenseness and vitality? Might not even sleep itself be conquered by a generation without enough time to enjoy all the world would then be offering?

John stared out across the sea. Suddenly exquisite was its monotony. The nostalgia passed.

It had been when the newsboys were raucously shouting 'Woyle!' 'Joynal!' that Julius had come in, looking more bewildered than he had ever seen him, more bewildered even than when an official on the Elevated seeing him smoking a cigarette on the platform had snatched it from his mouth and flung it over into the street below.

"You seem to have had some evening, Julius."

"John, listen to this. I met Coralie at the corner of 48th Street. She was wearing a dark brown turn-out and looked very smart. I asked her what she wanted to do, and she said she'd take me out to dine in some place uptown she knew. I suggested a taxi. 'A taxi? You've money to throw away haven't you?' Come on, we'll take the subway.' 'No, ma'am,' said I. 'We'll take a taxi.' I was nutty and daffy and dippy and every other kind of a lunatic, but I had my own way. No sooner were we inside than she said, 'See here, no playing around!' 'Good god, girl, wait till I start. I'm not Courtenay or any kind of a

mutt like that ' Well, we sat inside the most god-awful taxi I ever drove in, like a couple of Sunday-school teachers going to a Temperance Reunion until we reached somewhere round Harlem. It was a kind of a square with lighted shops and restaurants, but utterly suburban. 'Are you going to buy me a dress before we go for eats?' she asked. 'Sure, I'll buy you a dress,' calculating rapidly I had a hundred dollars in my pocket-book and hoping they would be enough. Well, we went into a drapery-store. They were just about to close down for the night. Coralie wanted an evening frock and had them hook a couple off their stands in the window. One was dead white. The other was a kind of a peacock-blue. The white looked the more expensive, but I certainly liked it best and said so. She told the stately matron who was serving her to have it wrapped up and give me the bill. I had a bit of a shock for the moment because I read it as 125 dollars, but when I looked again it was 12 50, and if ever you buy a better dress for two pounds ten shillings I'll be glad to know where you bought it. We walked out of the shop with the parcel which she gratified me by carrying herself, and we had a thoroughly second-class meal at the restaurant next door, after which we went to what she with justice called a bum picture-show. I cannot think why they don't get down to films in this country. The cinema should be its ideal art form. When we came out of the picture-theatre I insisted on driving her home in a taxi. 'You don't want to waste your money like that. We'll go back in a trolley-car.' But I was firm. And we found the same taxi we'd driven out in. I guess the driver must have kind of anticipated the return journey. 'You needn't have wasted your money on a taxi, smartie,' she murmured as she cuddled up close, 'I was going to take you back to my room anyway.' 'Where do you live?' 'Oh, I live in the Van Something-or-other hostel for working women,' she told me. 'But you can't take me back there.' 'Sure, I can

take you back there 'The janitor won't expect more than a dollar' Well, this hostel was somewhere in the Nineties—a whacking great building which I wasn't surprised to hear housed over five hundred girls. The only condition for residence was the proof of earning an honest livelihood. She stopped the taxi a block before we reached the hostel. There was a kind of porch with a room off it in which a large fellow in a peaked cap was sitting reading. She murmured something to him and winked at me, which I took to be the signal for the presentation. He accepted the dollar-bill without a word, and then unlocked a door at the end of a kind of arcade, signing us to go in. 'He'll leave it open for you to come out,' she murmured to me and led the way along a corridor tiled in white like a hospital. Presently we came to some stone stairs and I followed her up almost four flights. Then another long white-tiled corridor, and finally she reached the door of her room, which she unlocked. It was a small room distempered in cream. Just a bed and chest of drawers and chair and wardrobe and a basin with hot and cold water. On the walls were two or three pious texts and a print of the Good Shepherd. I must have looked astonished, for she told me the hostel wouldn't let the girls put up pictures of their own. And then she started to undress. 'Look here, Coralie,' I protested, 'this is too cold-blooded a performance for me.' 'I guess you're scared,' she suggested. 'You needn't be scared. I'll walk down with you to the door in case you forget which turning to take. Nobody's going to interrupt us, honey-bunch.' By this time she was lying on the bed. I pulled up a chair and sat down beside her, feeling like a doctor. 'It's no use, Coralie. It's too cold-blooded,' I told her. 'Hell,' she spat, 'take your dress and wear the darned thing yourself. I guess it'll fit you better than me.' 'Look here,' I argued, 'I've had a bully evening with you, and it's been worth the price of that dress to me just to

know you can walk into the Van What's-it-called Hostel by slipping the janitor a dollar, but it's no place for love-making. It casts a moral chill.' 'I thought you were a Sissie when you were so quiet in the taxi,' she jeered. But it was no use. I could as soon have made love on an operating-table!'"

It was then he had told Julius how distressed the Blakistons had been not to have known he had a friend staying with him, for they would have wished to invite him to dinner at the same time. And a week or two later an invitation had come for them both. After dinner Leonora Blakiston had shown Julius an Amati violin which had belonged to a younger sister who had died and who had intended to 'take up music very very seriously.' To his amazement Julius had picked up the violin and played the Perpetuum Mobile. He had not heard Julius play for years. Old Blakiston, as parched and wrinkled with money-making as a bit of popcorn, had looked a little uncomfortable at his guest's firework display on that fiddle of poor Carlotta's, for which he had paid seven thousand dollars, but Mrs Blakiston, a large dark woman glittering with diamonds and obviously either wholly or partially Jewish, had immediately recognized that this *was* fiddling, and as for Leonora, she had sat spellbound by the brilliancy of the performance. He had thought Leonora Blakiston just one of many hard wary little blondes until he watched her listening to Julius. The wariness had vanished, and though the hardness remained it had somehow turned into the strength of a woman who knows what she wants and intends to get it.

"Leonora Blakiston seemed to take rather a fancy to you," he had observed to Julius when they were walking back along Fifth Avenue, straight and cold and spacious under a starry October sky.

"I know she did I took rather a fancy to her "

He had wanted to ask Julius why, but had felt that such a question would imply disapproval And presently Julius had answered it

"There's a completeness about her You might call her porcelain till you suddenly realize she's unbreakable Yes, a completeness I think I've fallen in love "

"You've thought that a good many times "

"Yes, but never before with anybody who possessed such an advantageous background," Julius had retorted, turning round with a grin like a triumphant schoolboy's

"You wouldn't marry a girl for her money?"

"No, but if I like a girl I'm not going to let her money stand in my way All the same, she's not going to get me so easily No, sirree! Still, it isn't every day you meet a girl whose looks fascinate you and whose character may fascinate you and whose father can afford to subsidize an orchestra However, we don't have to worry any for the present We have three weeks of hard rehearsing before us, and then we go on the road for a week or two before opening on Broadway "

"But if you marry a rich girl, Julius, it's bound to mean slavery It always does If the woman has the money she feels stronger than the man, and she can never resist using her power I have noticed it time and again And in fact the man's strength does get sapped by it "

"My strength won't be sapped by it," Julius had declared confidently "Besides, if Leonora doesn't understand already that she has no chance of keeping me unless I'm made independent of her, then she isn't the Leonora I take her to be, and the marriage will not take place Oh, there'll be difficulties at first Old Man Blakiston who bought a 7,000-dollar fiddle for his younger daughter will think he can buy a fiddler for his elder daughter almost as cheaply When he finds how expensive that's going to be he'll shy Then it will be up to Leonora

And I've a hunch she'll manage it I hope she will Leonora isn't your type, but she suits me Besides, I have to think about the future Play again on the concert-platform I will not, because that means a certain end to any chance of real composing Teach I will not because that not only means an end to composing but is an intolerable bore into the bargain I will not take away from my mother what I gave her in my youth We may have a success with *Annette* We may not Very well, then, what is my future? Pretty dubious when I look at it Oh, not dubious enough to marry a girl for her money without wanting her for herself, but quite dubious enough to thank fortune that I see a fair prospect of getting the girl I want and through her the musical future I want "

"You're pretty hard, aren't you?"

"So is Leonora And so too, old timer, is life And if you were a bit harder yourself your outlines would be sharper "

Yes, Julius was right, John told himself as he picked up another of Gabrielle's letters This meeting at Naples was a mistake

I have seen Varenne and he has read to me his play 'Les Vierges Sages' he has called it Oh, my dear, it is brilliant and with such wit But I must tell to you that I am altogether amazed that he can suppose such a theme is possible on the stage In romance, yes Catulle Mendès, Adolphe Belot, Pierre Louys and others have been successful But I have said to him that I cannot see it on the stage For one thing it is not a sufficiently general theme And so much of the wit must therefore escape But Varenne insists that I am old-fashioned He says that my months in London and my stay at Larnay have made me even provincial I am, it would seem, no longer Parisienne He assures me that if I refuse this part I shall refuse the greatest success of my career Certainly it is a most wonderful part I am to be a

modern Sappho, I am poet and musician I am in fact to be the twentieth-century artist woman who at last restores to our sex the power of intellectual creation And so I have a salon of jeunes filles And, my dear, he has drawn the most perfect jeunes filles There is nothing so good since Willy's Claudine And of course in spite of all I can do they become entangled with men, until I am left quite alone, and for the end of the play he has made the most delicious pastiche of Racine so that the curtain falls on a tragic speech à la Phèdre Oh, it is very very amusing and indeed very very moving, but I ask myself if even a Parisian audience would tolerate it Or is Varenne right and have I been infected by the respectable English side of me after my triumph in your play? I wish you were with me, John, my dear, so that you could advise me, and yet now I am quite ridiculous, for certainly Camille Varenne is better able to advise me about Paris than John Ogilvie Oh, I am so perplexed And I must decide at once If I refuse, Varenne will offer it to Yvonne Lutier, and if she had a great success I should expire What I perhaps feel is that if the play were a failure it would be the play which was blamed, but if it was a success it would be Gabrielle Derozier who was responsible I cannot decide in this letter I will send you a telegram in a day or two

And the cable to say she had accepted the part had arrived some days before the letter At first he had supposed she had accepted some part in New York, and when his immediate reaction to the news had been a slight dismay he had tried to excuse himself to himself by attributing it to the prospect of Gabrielle's arrival in New York at a time when he was so much worried and preoccupied over *Annette* Her letter had unquestionably been a great relief, and he had cabled back to her

All my wishes for immense success tadore

But the cable had been delivered to her signed Theodore, and the explanation he had had to give of his attempt to abbreviate *je t'adore* had somehow taken all the fond sincerity out of the three words

It was not the rehearsals of *Annette* which stood in his memory as a worry so much as those three days of interviewing the candidates for the minor parts which had to be filled. After the first day in Kelly's offices of watching anxious actors and actresses come in one by one to answer the questions fired at them either by Kelly himself or his producer Nat Zipper, and then finding they expected him to make a decision, he had cried off the wretched business, with an assurance to Kelly that he would be perfectly content with any cast engaged by him and Zipper. There must have been two or three hundred people standing about for hours in the outer office and on the stairs or pacing the sidewalk up and down outside. So many of them had been English, too, hoping for the best because an English play was being cast, and the thought of them tormented by the fear of never getting an engagement in this great city with the Atlantic between them and home had the hopelessness of some poignant story by O Henry. Looked back at now the rehearsals hardly emerged from the vivid and diversified New York scene. Nat Zipper shouting at the performers from the back of the circle of a theatre borrowed for the day. Patrick J. Kelly shouting at the performers from the back of the circle of a borrowed theatre. Nat Zipper and Patrick J. Kelly shouting at one another at the back of the circle of a borrowed theatre. Zipper throwing his fedora down on the stage in a fury and kicking it into the auditorium. Kelly throwing his fedora down on the stage and jumping on it. Adelaide Orme standing upstage, her wrists pressed close to her long graceful flanks and her pretty hands stuck out at right angles like a mannequin's, 'And do I stand here, Mr Kelly, while you and Mr Zipper play football around the stage?'

Football A visit to West Point to see the Military Academy's match against Harvard The pale blue sky of a fine day at autumn's end, and the mist rising like woodsmoke as the afternoon waned The red leaves floating down from the trees That immemorial autumnal smell and pervasive air of academic calm Except for the red leaves instead of brown and yellow leaves it might have been Oxford The football, though, had been as unintelligible as modern Greek to a classical scholar And the organized cheering by the supporters of the two sides That daemonic youth in grey flannel trousers and white sweater who at intervals had leapt to his feet and turning his back on the game conducted phrenetically a choir of young men and maidens through the set formula of exhortation to the players It must be the vastness of the country and the acute individualism of the average American in business which encouraged this slightly artificial spirit of co-operation as a sentimental antidote It was doing for regular fellowship what Heinz was doing for tomatoes and beans Yet looked at from one angle it *was* an expression of democratic responsibility nearer to the spirit of ancient Athens than the exclusive enthusiasm of a crowd watching an Oxford and Cambridge football match, however much more spontaneous that might superficially appear Curious those contrasts of manners If you were introduced to an American he shook you warmly by the hand, expressed in some conventional phrase which his utterance made sound agreeably sincere his pleasure at meeting you, and supported that by the repetition of your name to show his interest in the occasion Such cordiality undoubtedly did sweeten social intercourse, and how quickly one came to depend on it!

How utterly taken aback he had been by Dick Huntley's response to his greeting that day they met at lunch in the Dana Gibsons' house Blast it, he and Dick had

shared digs in their fourth year, and he had not seen him since he went to India when they met at lunch less than a week after Dick had landed in New York. Yet, all he had received from Dick standing with his back to the fireplace had been a casual nod and a 'Hullo, John,' as if he had walked into their Oxford digs on Monday morning after a week-end in town. Three months in America had been enough to make him for a moment or two resent so cool a welcome. No wonder Americans found English people stand-offish. Would anything ever shake them out of that complacent *civis Romanus sum* attitude against a background of the country in which they hunted and the moors over which they shot?

On the other hand how immensely superior were the manners of the average English policeman or railway porter or bus conductor to those of the minor public servants of America. Probably the most damaging criticism of a self-conscious democracy like the United States or France might be found in the demoralizing effect it exercised over its petty officials. Even an Italian forgot his manners when he donned a peaked cap in New York. If you asked an American how he accounted for this insolence on the part of the people whose wages he helped to pay he was inclined to excuse them on account of the nervous strain the hustle of New York life entailed.

Yet, except at the rush hour in the evening when what seemed the whole population of Lower Manhattan was bent on reaching Upper Manhattan and beyond as quickly as possible, the hustle of New York was not apparent. People strolled along Broadway as if it were a country lane. Crosstown trams drawn by horses that might have been survivors of the Gettysburg gun-teams moved not much faster than the battered green caterpillars they resembled. A horse-omnibus was driven with heavy dignity up and down Fifth Avenue every half-hour, inside of which except for a positive assurance that

Longfellow was dead you would not have been surprised by a sight of the poet composing a long jingling string of *Hiawatha* before the omnibus reached Central Park And if you went to visit a business-man downtown, some Vice-President of an industrial organization with Inc after it, although you might have a brief illusion of hustle in the elevator and perhaps get carried beyond the floor at which you wanted to disentangle yourself from the crowd of stenographers and drummers and office-boys, once you reached the room of the business-man an atmosphere of majestic leisure and luxurious peace would enfold you The great polished table in the middle of the room would soothe your spirit like some mountain tarn, unruffled even by a rising trout If you went to the window to gaze at one of those magical views of New York from a fortieth or fiftieth storey you would hear the wind lispng round the metal casements, but never a murmur of the city seething far below And your host would tell you that he was pretty busy just now but that he thought there was time to go and have a bite of lunch at his Club As you drove with him through the cañon of Wall Street in his automobile you would wonder if the job of entertaining you was holding up the final arrangements for a steel trust or a corner in wheat And about five o'clock in the afternoon your delightful host would look at his watch and say he thought he wouldn't go back to the office now, but go right along home as his wife was taking him to the opera this evening and that meant a darned early dinner And when you thanked him for his hospitality he would assure you it was good for a man to escape sometimes from the hustle of Wall Street and spend a quiet hour or two, sitting back and talking about the world outside the world of business At the same time you had a suspicion inside yourself that the most strenuous part of his day was taking his wife or, as he preferred to say (for the seats in the box were hers), being taken by his wife to the opera

Julius and he had gone to the Metropolitan Opera House when Caruso was singing in Puccini's *Manon*, and they had agreed that what they would remember longest of the experience was not Caruso's singing, though he was in magnificent voice, but the fat brocaded behinds of the feminine seatholders in the boxes, bulging not merely over their flimsy gilt cane-seated chairs but half-way over the low parapet which was all that prevented their falling like huge pumpkins on the audience in the fauteuils

"Nevertheless," Julius had said, "I'm bound to admit there is more evidence here of their enjoying the opera than I ever found at Covent Garden, or even in Paris except when *Faust* or *Samson and Delilah* or Massenet's *Manon* was being performed. Probably the enjoyment is due to the high content of Jewish blood in this audience. What about the Germans? Oh, they go to Wagner, but enjoyment is hardly the word for their reaction to that. The only opera the nation really enjoys is Weber's *Freischütz*. Ever see it? It's the kind of play one had for a toy theatre, twopence coloured and a penny plain for the performers whom one cut out of paper and mounted on cardboard. Those freeshooters will be shooting up Europe presently, however, and that won't be so amusing."

"Do you really think so?"

"Sure of it. I was there this summer, and the whole country stank of gunpowder."

John listened now within himself, and sure enough there was distinctly audible the still small whisper of war's inexorable advance. It was the conviction of that which made all success so little worth while, which made all political opinion so fatuous, which made all art seem so futile and the notion of any kind of permanency whether of abode or ambition so repugnant. And as for personal ties, they were abhorrent. This mad idea of Gabrielle's that they should be married must immediately be

squashed when they met Why had he been such a fool as to agree to this meeting in Naples? He picked up the next letter almost resentfully

Well, I have telegraphed to you to-day that I have accepted to play the part Varenne has offered me in 'Les Vierges Sages' Perhaps I am not so wise myself It was such a difficult decision to make, and now that I have made it I am frightened, my dearest John Oh, yes, Varenne is confident Indeed he is so confident that I feel more frightened than ever I wish, I wish you could be here to reassure me I begin to understand that I was imbecile to let you go to America, for already I begin to think I cannot live without you

John pushed this letter back into its envelope without reading further He remembered well the day it reached him There had been some argument at rehearsal over the music, and Julius had not been there to take part in it He had been angry at his neglecting *Annette* to go off with the Blakistons on some motoring trip, and angry with himself for being irritated at Gabrielle's declaration of her dependency he had vented it all in bitter criticism of the way Julius was letting Leonora lead him so meekly to the altar

"You're being bought like some piece of bric-à-brac she has seen in a Fifth Avenue shop-window"

It was then that Julius had announced his intention of not coming to Toronto to conduct the first performance

"If you didn't mean to take this play seriously, why the hell did you ever agree to write the music?"

"I didn't agree to conduct I've weighed up these American theatrical people now, and if the first night is a frost I'm not going to let my handling of the orchestra be blamed for its failure"

"Be honest, Julius You know the reason is that

Leonora has persuaded you it's beneath your dignity to conduct a theatre orchestra at a try out. You and she have got to persuade old man Blakiston that with his money behind you you would be another Nikisch or Richter."

"Isn't that more or less what I implied? I can't afford a personal failure at this moment, and if you want my frank opinion *Annette* will be a failure. You agreed to let that lanky blondine sing the part. She's not another Gabrielle, you know."

"Do leave Gabrielle out of it. I'm getting fed up with this habit of attributing the success of every play to the blasted actors."

He had been tempted to add that without his invitation to write the music for *Annette* Julius would never have met Leonora, but out of respect for the ruthlessness of Julius's logic, which might have brought about an irreparable breach between them, he had kept silence, and when Julius had gone on to say that he had been invited to stay with the Blakistons while he was away he had wished him a pleasant time, feeling in his heart that this was the end of Julius so far as future collaboration between them was concerned.

A week later before he left with the company for Toronto he gave instructions at the Picardy not to forward any of his letters. He had felt he could not stand Gabrielle's nerves over *Les Vierges Sages* in addition to his own over *Annette*. That was the excuse he had given himself, but the real reason was his dislike of having to reply to Gabrielle's suggestion that he was indispensable to her happiness.

That journey northward to Toronto, the train hammering onward into the darkness like some titanic miner hammering into a seam of coal. The menace of the slow clang of the locomotive bell when the train slowed down to traverse the streets of some large town, and looking

out from the sleeping-berth to see in the murky glow a great banner suspended over the track and inscribed, as if to appease this clanging juggernaut, WELCOME TO SYRACUSE, or had it been WELCOME TO UTICA? Sleepless in that curtained fug of the Pullman, the kaleidoscope of New York shifting from pattern to pattern as the instant evocation of insomnia sought the dreams it was denied Pattern after pattern, hammering and clanging through the night A visit to the Woolworth Building out-topping all skyey aspirants, though as yet it was but a shell without floors, a network of huge girders through which one shot up nine hundred feet in the frame of an elevator, hanging to a rope to keep from being whirled off the wooden platform into space, up to that gothic balcony to gaze spellbound over the parapet at the chequered city and beyond to where the ocean spread glittering in the eye of the sun That life-giving sun of New York in the late fall The sidewalks of Fifth Avenue sparkling and ringing in the exultant frost Afternoon tea in the Plaza Hotel because women could smoke there in public Leonora Blakiston always wanting to take advantage of that privilege She and Julius talking away together, while he sat and listened to one of Leonora's classmates from Vassar chattering to him like a friendly bird

"And this is the only place in New York where a woman can smoke in public Except Rector's downtown Only of course Leonora and I couldn't very well go down there But I suppose you've been to Rector's downtown quite a lot, Mr Ogilvie? It's a great resort for theatre folk"

Rector's downtown? It was there he had seen Rosenbeck for the first time since that morning in the Waldorf He had wanted to go and speak to him, but Kelly with whom he was lunching had told him he didn't want to get himself mixed up with that guy, and just when he and

Kelly were beginning on their lobster Newburgh after the usual almost interminable wait for anything one ordered in a New York restaurant, Rosenbeck had come along to their table 'You treated me very dirty, Mr Kelly, over *Annette* I want Mr Ogilvie to know how dirty you treated me over my commission' Kelly's combative light-blue eyes had flamed above his out-thrust jaw and his mouth had twisted into a challenge 'Say, you big splurger, what have you to be sore about? You had your commission, didn't you?' 'Yes, Mr Kelly, but I ought to have a percentage on the gross' At which Kelly had let out at him with such a cold brutality of obscene and blasphemous invective as chilled the blood Rosenbeck had wilted and presently faded right away, and Kelly turning back to the lobster with gusto had said, 'I'm glad you were with me, Ogilvie, or I might have said more than I meant to that guy' He had tried to put in a word for the man to whom he felt he owed the fact that he was sitting in the genial clatter and chatter of Rector's downtown, but Kelly had assured him that Rosenbeck had been treated generously, and that had been the last he had seen of poor Rosenbeck Yes, that memory would always be his clearest of Rector's downtown

And Rector's uptown Columbus Circle whirring like a multicoloured catherine-wheel and reminding the respectable West Sixties that the winding river of Broadway was navigable to pleasure as high even as this The opening of the Cort Theatre high up in the Fifties farther uptown than any theatre had reached yet Diamond Jim Brady sitting in the fauteuils at the first night of a play called *Peg o' My Heart* Sweet as a preserved cherry that play He had thought it revoltingly sweet, but it had been a tearing success Cinderella plays always were Such a success that the management need not have bothered to create talk by lighting up the arch of the proscenium during the intermissions with bulbs of

electric light that dazzled the audience and made even Diamond Jim Brady look quietly dressed. Those absurd lighting stunts! Belasco's Theatre with its illuminated parasols stuck in sockets about the auditorium, and ritualistically removed by the female ushers in caps and aprons before the curtain went up, and replaced when it fell. A success there because one scene showed an exact reproduction of a Childs' Restaurant. There were dozens of Childs' Restaurants all over New York where you had the illusion you were eating in a bathroom, but the exact reproduction of one on the stage filled a theatre.

It was to some restaurant in Columbus Circle that he had gone to tea one afternoon to hear a famous coloured band playing ragtime. Women had got up from their tables to dance with their beaux, and this dancing of ragtime in hats and ordinary afternoon dresses had had a curiously raffish effect. They must not smoke cigarettes after their tea, these respectable women, but they could shuffle and wriggle about the dancing-floor to those provocative rhythms *Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo! It's the cutest little thing! Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo!* Hammering and clanging on northward in this curtained fug *Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo!* And the cabaret at Shanley's with that bevy of lovely blondes winding in single file like a ribbon of silk among the tables and singing each with her hands on the shoulders of the girl in front of her to a catchy refrain, '*Good-bye, everybody, everybody, good-bye*'. And at every restaurant when the orchestra played *Dixie* everybody clapped presumably to show that having beaten the South the North had now a soft spot for the South. There was almost a conscious patronage in that applause, the same spirit of modest superiority which made an English audience at a pantomime applaud with particular enthusiasm the kilts or the green-hooded colleens or the steeple-hats of Wales in a procession of all nations.

Somebody ought to start a cabaret in London But who could do anything in a city where the restaurants had to close half an hour after midnight, even if women *were* allowed to smoke in them provided they had a male escort? Nowhere in London like Jack's on Sixth Avenue where you could sit all night talking, and eat the best fish dishes in the world And that musty little saloon at the corner of 47th Street and Sixth Avenue Farrell's, wasn't it? where you could sit all night drinking, thanks presumably to a private arrangement with the police Yet there were very few clubs in which you could take out your pipe and light up without being rebuked for a breach of custom No wonder it was almost impossible to find any pipe tobacco fit to smoke in the country which grew the best pipe tobacco in the world It was almost impossible even to buy a decent cigarette, because you could find hardly a tobacco-store which was not tied to the products of the big tobacco trust There was a great deal in New York one would like to see in London, but not if it involved Americanizing English business to achieve it How had it happened that a nation which had exalted individualism to such a pitch had surrendered to these great trusts? He had asked this question of an acute student of the contemporary American scene, and the reply had been that they should be encouraged in order that when the moment was ripe the People should take them over as going concerns, and thus avoid any possibility of a popular revolution The election of Governor Wilson to the Presidency was a warning to Big Business that the eye of the People was upon them Meanwhile, the trusts and syndicates thrived Even the cinema world was divided between the Patents and the Independents *Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo! Hitchy-Koo!* Hammering and clanging on through the darkness

The kaleidoscope had kept on turning in his mind A crowd of people stopping to gape and stare at a butterfly

fluttering down Broadway on a mild November day. The dark throng whose labour was helping to fill with gold the huge concrete honeycombs emerging from them at the end of the day's work to swarm on the trolley-cars and hurry like ants down into the subway. The stenographers and milliners and manicurists chewing gum and reading the Green Magazine and the Red Magazine and every other kind of coloured magazine, but seeming to rise by instinct at their own station and still chewing to pick their way out of the crowded coaches. The men who could not resist smoking a cigarette between a couple of courses in a restaurant sitting patiently without smoking because it was forbidden, they too reading these magazines of countless variety. The Negro quarter in the West Fifties seen from the Elevated as if in an instant one had been transported from New York a thousand miles south. Those dark faces at the open windows, those dark forms lolling by them with such an easy grace of indolence. The congested stream of automobiles returning through Yonkers on a Sunday evening. London was lucky in having roads out of it in all directions. There would never be the same congestion there even if motor-cars should become as cheap as they were in America. A visit to Brooklyn to see one of the company who had fallen sick and wanted the author to use his influence with P. J. Kelly to keep his part for him when *Annette* opened on Broadway. The tired faded houses in the monotonous streets. The shabby gentility of that part of Brooklyn he visited. The sick actor in the overheated bedroom, so embarrassingly grateful for the spray of American Beauty roses he had brought him and the bunch of muscatel grapes. And driving back across Williamsburgh Bridge amid giant drays and lorries into a blazing orange sunset over New York. The river a fiery Phlegethon below, the tugs and lighters belching smoke. The battlements of

New York against that furnace of sky, the air a fume and glory of gold, and the passing men and women transfigured Why couldn't the film people manage to discover a method of colour photography which would reproduce such a scene? Painting could not achieve it The tranquillity of a painting would destroy the surge of life irradiated by this celestial fire It must move How pitifully the cinema was neglecting its opportunities!

And then the dim curtained fug of the sleeping-berth in that train hammering and clanging toward Canada had been illuminated by the great idea Leave colour out of it at present, why could not the cinema do what his sleepless brain had been doing all night? Why could it not evoke picture from picture like his kaleidoscopic thoughts? The film people had the only really new medium for art, and they were doing nothing with it except make cowboys gallop at an unnatural pace through an eternally similar landscape One could forgive the English film producers, they had not the inspiration of a new name to fit this new potential art But in New York! To find here those little picture-theatres as drab and dingy and dull as the inside of this Pullman! No wonder Pat Kelly had chewed his cigar contemptuously at the movies! They were living dramatically in 1850 and photographically in 1890 With the world to play with, they were happy with flickering novelettes Nevertheless they could not stay in this position And he had vowed that night to preach the gospel of ambitious films when he returned to England If they were so far from grasping the potentiality of this embryo art in America, let England show the lead And with his mind turning to the rhythm of the future he had presently fallen asleep to be woken again, it seemed a few minutes later, by somebody's pulling back the curtain of his berth to announce Niagara was in sight He had looked out of his window and seen the Falls in the early morning light of a

grey day exactly like a faded photograph of themselves 'Movement,' he had exclaimed to himself, 'movement! Even the Niagara Falls cannot thrill when one is too far away to appreciate that they are moving' And lying awake in the morning he had gone on with his plan to revolutionize the cinema He was still thinking of it while in trousers and vest he waited in the queue outside the room where men sat and smoked when they were not washing themselves in one of the five metal basins Where he was standing he was getting a rich whiff from the cubby-hole in which the Negro porter dozed away his night, that and the sound of the hawking and clearing of throats by the tooth-washers already in possession of the basins had made him feel a little sick

The King Edward Hotel, Toronto No drinks in the dining-room after seven o'clock on Saturday evening until Monday morning Waiters enquiring solicitously how many bottles of Canadian Club whisky you would be wanting sent up to your bedroom No dress rehearsal in the theatre till midnight because it had been lent to an Evangelical Congress and the idea of using the theatre for its own profane business before the Sabbath was over would have pained religious opinion That hardworked underpaid chorus-girls should be kept up all night and fetched down to the theatre again at noon before the first performance of a new play on Monday evening was believed to express the wishes of this jealous God of Israel Whom the members of the Congress worshipped And that first performance which was neither a success nor a failure Kelly arriving on Wednesday night and declaring the whole play must be radically changed Nat Zipper telling Pat Kelly he could get to hell and find another producer Pat Kelly declaring he didn't have to get to hell to find another bum producer like Nat Zipper, and he'd take the play in hand himself Sitting up all night trying to get scenes ready for immediate

study and rehearsal Cables to Julius Cables back from Julius that they could do what they liked about altering the existing music, but that he refused to write any fresh music Buffalo Wasn't it here that President McKinley was assassinated? Montreal The revised version of *Annette* performed for the first time A much more appreciative audience than Toronto That could be explained by the French element Sleighs bumping over the slushy streets On Thursday Kelly had declared the play was now ready for Broadway, and that they would open at the Eagle Theatre in a fortnight's time In the Pullman he had heard one of the chorus girls asking little Gracie the business manager if he couldn't give her a lower berth because an upper berth made her feel sick He had told the little man to give her his berth because he preferred being above, and had hurried along to the smoke-room to avoid her thanks Here had come Gracie, full of protests 'Look here, Mr Ogilvie, you're the most democratic Englishman I've ever met Yes, sir, you certainly are But you can be too democratic, and it's too democratic for the author of the play to give up his lower berth to a chorus girl I know you don't give a darn about dignity and that kind of poppycock, but I gotta maintain discipline, and if Mr Kelly heard I'd let you give up your lower berth to one of the chorus girls I'd get the biggest calling down of my young life' 'Not if I explain to Mr Kelly that I'd asked for an upper berth and that was the only way you could manage it'

And just then P J K himself had joined them from the seclusion of his drawing-room to say he'd had a cable from New York an hour or so before they left Montreal that the show at the Eagle was beginning to play to big money, which meant there was no theatre for *Annette* perhaps until the New Year Three days later he had rung up the Picardy to say that he was having trouble with Adelaide Orme and that probably the production

on Broadway would have to be indefinitely postponed. But by that time he himself had been feeling so ill that the future of his play meant nothing to him. There was no future when one was as ill as that.

John picked up another of Gabrielle's letters from that bunch which had been waiting for him when he had returned to New York toward the end of December.

As I feared, 'Les Vierges Sages' has been a disastrous failure. Je suis abruti. When will you come back? I need you. I must talk to you about my future. I cannot write the details of this terrible affair. But I have been offered money, and quite a lot of money, to play in a film which Pathé Frères will make. I am tempted to accept. It is of Jeanne d'Arc. It will be a production on a grand scale. Something altogether new in the form of amusement. I have consulted my best friends and they do not believe it will damage my position. It will be a kind of patriotic gesture on behalf of France. Cable to me what you think. I have asked you so many questions and you do not make any reply. You just tell me that my letters do not reach you while you are travelling. I am so sorry that you are having such nuisances with Annette, but I will be quite frank and tell you that one side of me is proud and glad that without Gabrielle, Annette cannot come to life. Return to Europe, chéri, and we can console ourselves for our disasters. I look back to those sweet days together in London and weep to think that I have let you go to America. Life is so short, and we have thrown away these months like two children not knowing what we were doing. Whatever the reception of this musical version of Annette in New York take no more trouble with it. Reviens à ta Gabrielle qui t'aime. I want you to tell me how I am as Jeanne d'Arc. And dans le printemps when I shall have a holiday of a month we will go to Italy together and

*discover if we are meant eternally for each other I
begin to think yes What do you think? Think yes like
your Gabrielle We will find a retreat from the world,
mon amour Yesterday I was at a concert and was
hearing*

*Connais-tu le pays où fleurit l'oranger,
Le pays des fruits d'or et des roses vermeilles?*

*It is so banal, yes, but it has given me a profound
desire to be with you in that country of orange-trees*

It was that letter of hers, read just before the fever had run high, which had haunted his delirium. In that phantasmagoria of scenes and images, dissolving almost in the very moment of their projection, he had seemed to be playing in a film with Gabrielle the perfection of which always eluded him just as perfection seemed attained, in the way that disordered fancy ever rejoices to baffle its victim. Throughout the delirium he had believed himself on the point of realizing his inspiration to revolutionize the cinema by the help of Gabrielle, and when the fever had passed the idea of spending the hours of Spring with Gabrielle in Italy had become the sole object of getting well. When he had been strong enough to write a brief letter he had told her his one thought now was to leave New York as soon as possible and be with her again, and the cables she had sent, so tender and anxious and passionate, had seemed to him far more real than the American friends who had tried to cheer his convalescence with their gifts of flowers and fruit and books and their kindly chatter. He had been seized by such a revulsion against New York that he began to believe it was a threat to the rest of the world. The very skyscrapers which had stirred his imagination by their austere grace had turned into menacing portents of the megalopolitan prison to which humanity was

doomed This civilization, this culture, call it what you like, must extend its influence to Europe The superficial attractiveness of it was invincible He had even suffered a revulsion against his ambitious schemes for the cinema What had appeared vitally desirable in this state of mind had been the collapse of the whole film business

He picked up another of Gabrielle's letters and read

I expect you are right, and that it is the duty of all artists to oppose this horrible new medium of expression They all tell me that my Jeanne d'Arc will set a new standard for the cinema But where is the satisfaction for the actress? Yet I have not made such a mistake in accepting this part, for everybody is now saying that I must quickly come back to the stage I find that the memory of that horrible play of Camille Voreenre has already passed The réclame for Jeanne d'Arc has been worked up à merveille I assure you I am now nearly as great a martyr for France as La Pucelle In all the papers I read how much the public appreciates my reasons for making this film (which is to be of a length unheard of in France until now) but that an actress of my genius owes her admirers that intimacy of rapport which only the stage can offer, and that Paris is waiting for me to return in a part and a play worthy of me If you feel fairly sure that you will be able to travel by the beginning of March I shall arrange with Pathé to have at least the end of the month and all April en vacance, and return to make the plein air scenes at Orleans and Rouen and other places during the early summer But do not make me o poisson d'Avril, or I shall expire of chagrin Seven months! Will you be changed, John? I was becoming so frightened But now your letters tell me that I am necessary to your happiness, and I think you will be the same John who

has taught me to love And I think you can be very proud because I have not said so much to any man yet I cannot tell you how follement I long for you I have never before wanted Carême to arrive so soon, and though it is only February and the weather in Paris is quite abominable I must already call it le printemps to please myself with the reflection that this empty miserable and disappointing winter has departed Oh, we shall find parmi les orangers such a place for love And I am so pleased with the fashions this year They are altogether moi-même I shall buy myself quite a lovely trousseau

*Connais-tu le pays où fleurit l'oranger,
Le pays des fruits d'or et des roses vermeilles?*

And reading those lines and recalling the melody of Mignon's song he had felt convinced that presently he would look back from the reality of a passionate love to this winter in America as a child to a nightmare when it hears the birds outside the window singing in the early morning light On one wall of the sitting-room in the Picardy there had hung a steel engraving of the famous view of Vesuvius with the umbrella-pine in the foreground and opposite there had been an oil-painting of a red-capped Neapolitan fisherman playing the mandolin to some luscious-eyed fishergirl beside a cobalt sea He had composed a story in his head about those two pictures, how they were the last possessions of an exile from Italy who had sold them for a dime apiece to some dealer in old junk because he was starving And in his rebellion against the ugliness of this hotel sitting-room which had so nearly been the last sitting-room of his life, he had grown to regard those pictures not a bit less ugly than the sitting-room as two beacons assuring him of the

promised land across the Atlantic to which as soon as strength returned he would be travelling. The raucous cries of the newspaper boys proclaiming the *New York Journal* and the *New York World*, the maddening incompetency of the dirty Greek waiters, the bell-hop with the ice-water, the noise of the elevator just along the passage from the sitting-room door, the plush cushions on the chairs, the exhausted air after weeks of central heating in full blast, his still labouring lungs, and worse the grinding pain of the neuritis suddenly quickened to lancinating, rending spasms, the daffodils and tulips which pretended it was already spring, the Sunday papers each with several large supplements, the eternal telephone, the red, white and blue flicker of the sky-sign over the big Chinese restaurant from the right, the rumble of the Elevated from the left, the hotel doctor with his pug-nose and bulldog chin whose bedside manner was that of a second in the ring — and these two pictures on the writhing hotel wallpaper singing to him like Mignon of a country where the orange-trees grew.

Julius had been married in January. The final decision not to produce *Annette* in New York had distracted him less than a broken collar-stud.

John picked up and re-read the letter he had sent him on his honeymoon.

HOTEL GOLDEN,
SAN FRANCISCO
Feb 10

Dear John,

California is terrific. Why don't you come out here if only for a week and travel back with us? It's an experience you ought not to miss. Weather delicious. Flowers and trees and scenery not less delicious. The people extremely pleasant. And you who believe in the future of films really ought to see a most extraordinary

place that's growing up here called Hollywood One company has just got hold of a ranch and talk about building a universal city spreading over more than two hundred acres in which you'll find everything from a Down East slum to a Red Indian encampment There are plenty of intelligent young men full of tremendous schemes for the future I think the atmosphere of the place would catch your imagination If only they'd invent some way of synchronizing sound and action I'd be tempted to stay here myself and write film music I'm sure you're right and that this is the art of our time It's virgin territory No damned Homers and Shakespeares and Beethovens and Wagners to overlay us I note your beloved Goethe says that if he had been an Englishman he would never have attempted a grand-scale work, but that being a German he was not oppressed by the past, because there was no past in German literature Even without linking up the phonograph with the films I think that presently the big films of the near future I hear being discussed will require big theatres and so big orchestras If this development takes place I may find a way of giving music a cinematographic purpose

I do think you should make an effort to join us in California The sun will do you good In fact you might find it unnecessary to go to Italy at all! There's a man here called Redroad—Bob Redroad—who was at school with you at Randell's and says you may remember him because you kept a look out once while he climbed up the drain-pipe and put the school clock forward an hour He'd be a couple of years older than you. He's one of Carl Laemmle's pet producers and sent you word by me that if you came out to Hollywood there's a big future before a dramatist who will think in terms of the cinema and not in terms of the theatre That's the trouble at present with all of them—authors, actors, actresses and producers They've learnt their job in

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the theatre, and so they cannot grasp the fundamental difference between a theatre audience and a cinema audience. I think there's a lot in what he says, so I pass on his suggestion. He can introduce you to all the people who matter out here, and by what I gather these Independentists who are fighting the Patent Companies are going to win. If Gabrielle Derozier makes a hit with this Joan of Arc film she's doing she might care to try Hollywood. I find it fascinating. It's like being a kid again and having the finest toy in the world to play with. No traditions, no history, no pedantic rules. Everything new. If you don't manage to come out here, Leonora and I will be back in New York before you sail. We've taken an apartment on the West side looking over Central Park, and Old Man Blakiston is already talking of subsidizing an orchestra for his home town and seeing what I can make of it. Thanks for writing so encouragingly about Leonora to my mother. Of course these matters are not affected by other people. All the same one hates one's discoveries to be crabbed. L. is writing to you.

*Yours,
Julius*

He picked up Leonora's letter

My dear John,

Julius and I are terribly happy, and I do want to thank you for the way you must have written about me to Julius's mother. I was afraid you thought I was just a little hard-boiled New Yorker who was just sure she wanted a new lapdog. But I'll always remember what you did. I hated going off with Julius like that when you were so ill. I felt terribly mean. I'm so proud to think you believe I'll help Julius to arrive somewhere in music. It won't be my fault if he fails. And I'll re-

member what you said about American wives and English husbands, but I don't think you need worry about Julius He won't stand for much chivalry! Now, John dear, do come and join us out here if only for a couple of weeks I promise the honeymoon won't be too sticky!

Your affectionate

Leonora

"Damn it, I ought to have gone," John exclaimed to the Atlantic

He was back twenty years ago in a little house in Brook Green, he and three other small boys, slaves to that powerful magician Redroad who was producing *The Miller and His Men* for his toy theatre Their duty to watch the candles in the footlights, to be ready to unhook any character temporarily stationed on the stage for Redroad's manipulation, to work the traps, to stand by with the wings for a rapid change of scene, to make suitable ferocious murmurs off when the Miller and his Men were at their dastardly work, and finally during the somewhat long intervals to play in an orchestra of combs and toilet-paper accompanied by the ground-bass of a Jew's-harp They had always supposed at Randell's that Redroad's mother was a widow and had envied him his freedom from paternal interference Then one day Redroad had told them that his forthcoming production of *Harlequin Jack and the Beanstalk* as played at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1851, was the last at which they would assist because his father had sent for his mother and himself to join him in the United States 'And so I'll see Mitchell fight Corbett perhaps,' he had announced Awe at such a prospect had left them speechless Strange that Redroad should have remembered his name after all these years Yes, he ought to have gone out to this place Hollywood He should not have allowed the revulsion

against America brought on by illness and the disappointment over *Annette* to keep him from exploring the possibilities of the cinema under the auspices of an expert like Redroad. It was a neglect of an opportunity which he might regret to the end of his life. He had felt that suddenly and acutely when the *Princess Sophia* was moving away from the quay, and still more acutely when he was watching that stupendous façade of New York against the grey March sky. The first wonder of it had returned, that first breath-taking revelation of a veritably new world, from which he was now flying to the refuge of the too familiar world of yesterday. Moreover, he had madly allowed Gabrielle to suppose it was she who was drawing him to Europe.

John looked at the letters she had written to him after she had heard of his illness. No, those he could not read again. That warmth of tenderness, which when he was sunk in the lassitude of a weary convalescence had seemed to give him faith that life would once more be worth living, would now when he needed no such assurance irritate him with the reminder that for such warmth she would expect a devotion beyond his capacity. In letter after letter she had expressed her rapture at the knowledge of how much he was dependent on her, and to read of that rapture in this empty clarity of oceanic air would be an intolerable imprisonment of the mind. Why, why must a woman flaunt her possessiveness at the first sign she detects of a man's weakness? In London their loves had moved in step with one another. Indeed if either had ever lagged behind the other it had been hers. It had been she who used to remind him that before everything she was an artist, she who had always hinted at the inevitable transience of their passion. She had loved no other man so deeply as him. She had been frightened by the revelation of her own capacity for love. It might happen that she should one day be faced by the necessity of choosing be-

tween him and her art, and he could see the shrug of her shoulders on that Sunday afternoon. She had been looking her loveliest, the dappled sunlight playing on her white dress as she lay back in the canoe when he had paddled to the shade of an overhanging willow. Their progress up the Thames from Sonning had seemed as effortless as the progress of the high clouds that breasted the June sky. '*Ah non, non, ça ne dure pas,*' she had sighed. And when he had pressed her to tell him the thought which had provoked the sigh, she had said she was letting herself drift upon a summer stream, that she must face the day when for the sake of her art she might have to make a choice and it was then she had sat up in the canoe and shrugged her shoulders and dipped a hand in the river as if the water would remind her of the coldness and dubiety of circumstance on which she was now dreamily floating.

And it had not been the provocative denial of herself, with which whether of body or mind a woman steps back to leap further. At that time Gabrielle had foreseen and accepted the end of their liaison, and when the American production of *Annette* had called for his presence she had let him go with an equanimity and an air of leaving the future to take care of itself which even in the excitement of the prospective journey had stung slightly. Yet with her very first letter, before she had heard from him and been stung in her turn by seeming to detect an insincerity in his avowal that he would be enjoying New York much more if they were together, she had ceased to leave the future to its own devices and was endowing their love with a permanence she had never in her moments of most fervid passion accorded to it before they parted.

The failure of the play in Paris and the experiment she was making with the films made her desire intelligible enough, and that fresh aspect of their artistic sympathy had not irked him in the least, for by the time he returned

to Europe the problems and trials of *Annette* would have lain behind him. If she had made demands then upon his creative energy he would have found them a stimulus. It was his illness, with the failure of the play and the withdrawal of Julius into marriage, which had made him weakly follow what now too late he recognized was no more than a sentimental mirage. Too late? Well, of course it was too late. He owed Gabrielle too much to hurt her. Without her he would not be in the position he occupied to-day. He could not land at Naples and announce baldly he was no longer in love with her. After those letters of his from the Picardy Hotel during the last two months the only explanation she would find to account for his change would be his having fallen in love with somebody else. Moreover, even if he were to try to make her understand that those letters had been an expression of his weakness after the delirium of high fever, that would not salve her pride. *'Gabrielle, the fact is I have passed on to another plane of ambition. I view life differently since these months in America. This love of ours which was perfect in its prime has outlived its actuality. It is something in the past. I see myself like des Grieux or Murger's Rodolphe or Wilhelm Meister, and if we try to restore our love to what it was it will become play-acting. You yourself always used to say that one day you might have to choose between me and your art. Well, I'm filled with new ideas now and if I try to pick up August 1912 in March 1913 it just won't work. I'm sorry if you feel I'm treating you badly, but you are an actress of genius, and I believe that in a very short while you will admit I am right. It is because I have loved you so much that I have the courage now.'* Then what? As if there were a chance of his having the courage to talk like that when he and Gabrielle were together. Why, he could not even bring himself to the point of re-reading these last passionate letters with their eternal refrain of *'reviens, je t'aime'*. Besides, Gabrielle was too realistic to be bothered

with any theories about the cause of his change toward her. A woman like her, sophisticated by twelve years' experience of the French stage, was not going to accept a lot of psychological blah as a salve for being thrown over by a man she had fancied was utterly hers. Perhaps after all she would not be too possessive, in which case it might be feasible to preserve the illusion that they were the protagonists of a *grande passion*. They might be able to continue satisfied for a while by the careful pretence of love, satisfied as some would-be credulous girl is satisfied when after counting the plum-stones on her plate or puffing the seeds from a blowball and repeating *Il m'aime il ne m'aime pas il m'aime beaucoup il m'aime à la folie*, she finds that the last plum-stone or the last feathery seed to float off upon the summer breeze coincides with the triumphant *à la folie*.

If only she would not be too possessive and irritate him by claiming an exclusive knowledge of his character, and worse by suggesting that his future as a dramatist was dependent on her wisdom and experience and intuitive judgment! If she would be content with the bloom of young Desire and not try to illuminate it with the purple light of Love, time might achieve for them an unreproachful end to their liaison as quiet as moonset. But some of her last letters had indicated that she was contemplating tenderly the permanent liaison of marriage. The silver Atlantic seemed to shrink to a dish-cover and descend upon his liberty as a horrible claustrophobia seized him. Marriage! He shuddered. Leonora had vowed that the object of her life should be to leave Julius free to compose the music he wanted. Yes, she would let him lock himself up when he was at work in the beautifully equipped room her father's dollars had provided for him. Yes, she would agree to live in Pittsburgh or Kansas City or Utah if his orchestra demanded it. Yes, she had surrendered to Julius's insistence that he must be materially independent.

of her and some of Old Man Blakiston's many dollars hypothecated for that purpose, but only as long as he was married to Leonora Blakiston. Such was not perfect freedom. Besides, it was too comfortable a life for a creative artist, and if he were content with that comfort it would end in fatty degeneration of his art. Even if Leonora should most improbably yield him his freedom for emotional adventure, Julius was too decent to live on another woman's money and rob her of all her pride. But Julius must solve his problems by himself. His own problem was approaching unpleasantly nearer with every revolution of the *Princess Sophia's* screws. Marriage with Gabrielle was out of the question, but how was he to convey as much to her without wounding *her* pride? For ten years he had philandered agreeably (sometimes enough in love to be able to persuade himself it was not philandering) and he had not left one woman embittered by his association with her. Moreover, his own dislike of marriage had been a perpetual deterrent from the easiest side of philandering, that with other men's wives. Marriage was an institution with which he did not wish to be involved, even if successful in preserving his amateur status therein. He was not willing to admit that his love for Gabrielle was philandering, merely because he was not prepared to make it a permanent liaison. His love for her would stand always for him as the expression of his first success. Whatever the future held, he would have had that golden hour, and she linked with it would never grow old. Yes, he should have gone to California and tested Gabrielle by asking her to join him there. But she might have taken him at his word, which would have been disastrous! Gabrielle would not have been suitably framed by the American scene. She would have hated America. Well, and that might have solved the problem. She would have insisted on returning to Europe and he would have been able to declare that the demands of art kept him in California. Their breach

would have been caused by exactly what she had been wont to fear might one day cause it. They could have separated with mutual goodwill. Now he had blocked that way out by letting her suppose she was the prime necessity of his being, and unless she, too, shaken by the failure of Varenne's play and frightened about her cinema experiment, had followed a sentimental mirage which would dissolve when they both met again, it looked as if that golden hour of first success would be tarnished by the memory of an embittered woman. Fool that he was, he had even written to Miriam with his eyes on that sentimental mirage. He picked up her last letter which had reached him yesterday.

21 CLAREMOUNT GARDENS,
HAMPSTEAD,
N W

February 27 13

Dearest John,

Your news about Julius is encouraging. I have had a charming letter from his Leonora in answer to the one I wrote her after first hearing from you. She urges me to take ship at once and come to stay with them, but I have said I would rather welcome them in England. A daughter-in-law and a country I have never seen, both at once, are seeming at the moment too much to deal with. And after your first enthusiasm about America you have succeeded in making me terrified of it. I'm so happy you really are quite well again now. Yes, I dare say you're right, and that Julius's freedom as a boy has equipped him to withstand all this alarming comfort, not to say luxury, in which he appears to be wallowing. The typical picture of him in my mind is always in that house in Galicia playing a sonata with that delightful school-master or a passacaglia with that equally delightful

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priest And because I was so much older that time we stayed with him in the summer of 1902 seems to me only yesterday, whereas to you it will be seeming a century ago Yet because you were so much younger than I you will be remembering the whole of the holiday in detail whereas for me only a few disjointed pictures remain in my mind Well, well, we shall have to wait to see how this experiment in matrimony turns out You have made me hopeful, but I am always oppressed by this feeling that the men of my family will never attain happiness

I heard from Emil this week He says that the Balkan war has kept him immensely busy, and that he cannot bring himself to resign from the Consular Service while matters are in such a mix-up in the Levant It is the problem of the refugees which he feels he ought not to turn away from now He is a little disquieted by the appointment of Military Consuls all over the Levant, and says the feeling of a general European war being imminent is universal there If he is right I fear it will mean his resignation will again be postponed But we have had this feeling ever since 1911 and I keep telling myself that such a catastrophe could not really happen so late in the story of civilization

I know you are infinitely contemptuous of Emil's surrender to the temptations of officialdom, but I'm thankful that he did impose on himself such a discipline If the Russian semi-revolution had not happened in 1905 while he was still at Balliol and petered out so dismally he would probably now be conspiring in the back streets of Zurich or Berne 'To fight the official mind one must be an official oneself for a time' Hence the Consular Service What I hope is that he will surrender to the charm of promotion (for he has the curious vanity of power which characterizes our race) and end as a Consul-General in Alexandria or Constantinople This is heresy to be writing to you, but you must ascribe it to

this fretting premonition of unhappiness for the men of my family

Talking of premonitions, I was dining with the Portheims on Campden Hill last week and found myself at table next a young man with dusty gold hair, very shy and silent, whose name I had not caught. I tried topic after topic without being able to get him going, and at last in despair I asked if he knew anything about flying. He turned round quickly and looking at me or rather beyond me with the strangest cloudy blue eyes said he was very keen on it, and as he spoke only his body seemed still in the room. I asked him if he had done much flying and he mumbled something about not so much as he hoped to do, and our conversation came to an end. Afterwards I found he was the famous young aviator Ivor Lambert who has won races and made altitude records and I know not what besides. To-day I read in the paper that he set out to fly to the Sahara and was lost in the Mediterranean. It was the first time I had ever met an aviator, and if Lambert is typical of this frightening new form of progress it frightens me more than ever, for he seemed outside ordinary mortality, the forerunner of some new kind of man.

At the same party I met your father and Lady Ogilvie. They were both most charming to me and said they hoped I would dine with them sometime. They had both been much worried by the news of the illness and were disappointed, I think, that you were going to Italy before coming back to England. David goes to Eton in September year, I hear, and also that Prudence is begging to be allowed to go to St James's School for Girls, which doesn't please your stepmother at all. She told me that her last hope of persuading her to stay content with an admirable governess is yourself.

Will you come back in the summer? I shall confess at the risk of incurring your disapproval to a slight

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dismay at this flaming up again of your I really can't write love because I don't believe love works that way so please read 'passion' without any derogatory suggestion I rejoiced in your enthusiasm about America It seemed to me exactly what your Muse needed We jog along in Europe on our own well-laid Roman roads, and European writers and painters and musicians find it difficult to get off them without losing themselves in the formlessness of open country I note recurrent efforts to escape, but the modernity of most of them is too self-consciously desperate, and I distrust the mutual admiration methods by which the threatened revolution in art is carried on I should not object to mutual admiration if all the members of a 'group' were of equal stature, but they never are Here and there one detects a genuine originality, but so much of it reminds me of the symbolists of the 'nineties who used the same methods That was a case of two or three really great men whose greatness was lost sight of in the swarm of adoring white mice they carried about to squeak about their greatness to an unappreciative bourgeoisie

This queer Viennese doctor called Freud whom you have never mentioned and whose work I don't think you have yet read will soon inspire a herd of imitators He has much to teach us, but he strikes me as unbalanced and dreadfully credulous—like so many daring explorers Still, I think it would be worth your while to have a look at him

What I felt America might do for you was to enlarge your ambition Perhaps Julius has done the wisest thing he could do He is very wise of course It evidently made an overwhelming immediate impression on both of you, and I am disappointed that you have had this revulsion which after all is due chiefly to illness, and you might turn against any country in which you had been as ill as you were in New York You say now that the whole struc-

ture of American civilization is gimcrack, that the whole of its progress is superficial, that even its very novelty is an illusion That judgment seems to me, who of course have never been to America, the judgment of neurasthenia I'm sure, perfectly sure, that your first impression was your true self and that very soon you'll be amazed how easily you could behave rather like a livery old conservative general

You have set your heart on returning to Gabrielle and finding with her in the orange-groves of a somewhat lusciously painted Sorrento consolation for your afflicted spirit, and I shall not be idiotic enough to argue with you. Still, this I will say, and if it enrages you I shall have to wait patiently for forgiveness Your letter to me in which you explained how you intended to cure yourself of the whole American experience by this prospective idyll did not ring true I don't mean to say you didn't manage to believe what you were writing to me But it was an induced emotion It was indeed rather like a well-put-together third act, which if the two chief parts are well played (and it's surprising what two sincere performers can make of what had seemed in script an insincere play) might easily come off You know how delightful I found Gabrielle, but she is an actress, and prejudice makes all of us who are not actresses suspect the genuineness of their emotions And you are a writer of plays, which, unfair though it may be, exposes you to the suspicion of dramatizing a situation

I know I'm not being very tactful in writing this, but I must say it If when you are on the high seas and feeling well you begin to wonder whether Gabrielle spells finality for you, don't, I beg you, give way to that cowardice which masquerades as kindness and that vanity which dresses up as honour, but face the cold fact of an outlived passion without having recourse to the chafing-dish There is no recipe, however cunning,

*which can make a satisfactory rechauffé of cold love
And if I am wrong and if America was a nightmare
from which you are waking to the dawn of your heart's
desire, why, nobody will be more happy than this
potential grandmother*

Miriam

Oh, she was right, of course, but from the security of fifty years of rigorous self-discipline it was so easy to underestimate the depth of Gabrielle's emotion. And anyway, it did not require much depth of emotion to sink a woman's pride. Nor was Gabrielle the kind of woman that would accept a pretence of inexorable destiny. She had had her own way for too long.

John closed the attaché-case. The future of his relations with Gabrielle must inevitably haunt the back of his mind until they met again, but there should be no more deliberate meditation on that future. He was glad he had arranged with that pleasant young American to meet for cocktails.

The smoking-room of the *Princess Sophia* was not disguised as a ballroom hall. It could not have been taken for anything except what it was. The brief intensive friendships of voyage after voyage across the Atlantic, the rapid intimacies, the business deals, the drinks offered and accepted, the stories applauded with laughter, the ship-board gossip and scandal, even the very rattle of the dice and shuffle of the playing-cards, had all contributed something of themselves toward this atmosphere of fellowship which was so immediately perceptible to the traveller who found a warm refuge here from the oceanic wastes without.

The Langridges had not arrived when John came in, but his table-mates were ensconced in one of the recesses,

the semicircular seats of which were covered with that leather which suits alcohol and tobacco. They hailed him at once, and he paused to ask the smoking-room steward to bring another round of what they were drinking, with a gin-ricky for himself.

"Now what's yours?" simultaneously demanded Chester Mewburn, James Warner Apthorpe, and Harry Garron.

"Nothing doing," said John, "I've just told the steward to repeat the dose."

"Well, for the love of Mike," exclaimed Mewburn, "can you beat that? Of all the goldarned go-getting guys, you mean to say you told George the steward to

"Yes," John admitted. "That's just exactly what I did."

"I wonder how many rounds of drinks have been drunk in here since this ship was launched?" speculated Apthorpe.

The drinks had hardly been set on the table when the Langridges came into the smoking-room, and John hastily swallowing his gin-ricky prepared to join them.

"I'll be seeing you at dinner," he told his companions.

"Can you beat it?" gasped Mewburn, as John with a grin walked away to the other side of the smoking-room. He saw that Mrs Langridge was even more attractive at close quarters than she had daintily appeared walking across the dining-saloon at lunch. Red-rose complexion, flashing dark brown eyes set with a slight slant above high cheek-bones, full mobile lips, cleft chin, soft wavy warm-brown hair, and as she stood up to greet him, youth in her smile and long-legged grace and slightly self-conscious cordiality.

"This is Mr Ogilvie, Athene," said her husband. And in the surprise of meeting for the first time in his life a woman with the beloved name of his dead mother John

could only stammer the conventional response. An observer might have been forgiven for fancying that he had been swept away by the loveliness of this young American woman. And that was exactly what Wacey Langridge did fancy, not without a trace of possessive complacency. He was sure he was the husband of the most attractive woman in the world, and this kind of confirmation was welcome to him.

John did like her very much, but even if he had been sufficiently charmed to break his rule of avoiding entanglements with married women he was far too much preoccupied with the problem of Gabrielle, to whom every twenty-four hours of steaming was bringing him some three hundred and sixty miles nearer, to allow himself a moment's consideration of Athene Langridge as anything except the delightful young wife of a new acquaintance with whom but for this eternal preoccupation with Gabrielle he might have embarked upon an intimate friendship. Wacey Langridge was full of confidences which he used to retail to John in that pleasant soft Southern voice of his whenever his wife was busy with their two-year-old son, and that was for a great part of the long ocean-faring day, for she took her position as a mother seriously, so seriously that it did occur to John once or twice, when he had succeeded in putting Gabrielle and his own responsibilities out of his head, to wonder if she was quite so completely absorbed in Wacey as Wacey was in her. He had been in love with her since she was fourteen, and had married her when she was just twenty. As he told the story there was somehow a suggestion of a triple triumph first over Athene herself, then over Athene's father, who was a man of family and substance in Atlanta devoted to his eldest daughter, and finally over Atlanta opinion which seemed to have decided it was time young Wacey Langridge got down to hard work instead of floating around Europe as an author on the strength of

an occasional contribution to the less important American magazines about the places he had been visiting. It would seem to have been Wacey's father who had saved the situation by making his son a generous enough allowance to persuade Lawton J. Gilmer not to oppose any longer the marriage of his eldest daughter.

"But he's tickled to death now he has a grandson, and I believe I'll pull off this novel of mine during the next year. I had a fine talk about it in New York with Bob Wingate of Dodd, Mead, and Bob told me if I could get it down on paper the way I'd sketched it for him he could pretty well promise me his firm would accept it for publication. Sometime when we have an hour or two to pass I'd like to give you an outline of the way I see the story. We've a lease of a corking little villa for three years. See here, you must come and stay with us. Citrano lies on the Salernian Gulf on the Sorrento side of Ravello. The bathing's as good as anywhere, and lots of amusing folk always coming and going with a fine bunch fixed up with villas the same as we are. Fact is Citrano is almost too amusing for a man who wants to work. Athene and I tried the Italian Riviera, but she found it pretty dull, and I didn't seem to get a move on my work in the villa we had near Rapallo the winter before last. Too many British old maids and retired army officers thinking it was cheaper to live in Italy than at home. Citrano's different. Artists mostly of any old nation. I think you'd fall for Citrano, Ogilvie."

"I expect I would," John replied, making a mental note of it as one place which he would dissuade Gabrielle from visiting, should she ever express a desire to do so.

This talk with Wacey Langridge was typical of many. For a novelist, or would-be novelist, he was a singularly bad judge of character, and at the same time extremely credulous. The most preposterous bit of shipboard scandal floating along from deck-chair to deck-chair would

be eagerly snapped up by him and retold to John with blandly improbable additions of his own. In spite of having been wandering round Europe for the last ten years, except for the times he had returned to America with the object of persuading Athene to marry him, he still had a combination of naivety and knowingness which resembled that of some untravelled American youth of eighteen. He had read a good deal, but apparently without the slightest development of his critical faculties, and any new book he read, even if it was a world's classic, became a discovery of his own, so much so that John would find him retailing as a personal experience of his own some familiar anecdote he had found on the printed page. His dislike of embarrassing another man prevented any protest for a time, but the habit irritated him, and one day losing patience he reminded Wacey that the story he had just told as an experience of his own in Spain might be read, rather appropriately, in the pages of Borrow.

"Why, I've just been reading *The Bible in Spain*," said Wacey.

"I know you have. I was with you when you took it out of the ship's library, and it was I who advised you to read it."

"And that story I told you about what happened to me when I was stuck for a night up in the mountains beyond."

"You'll find it in Borrow," John interrupted firmly.

"I told you what a good picture it gave of life in the remoter parts of Spain. I don't remember his telling the story I just told you. Perhaps I skipped that chapter. But it just goes to show how true to life Borrow is."

"He was the biggest liar that ever put pen to paper," John declared.

"Why, I don't accept that at all, Ogilvie. Oh, Athene," he called to his wife who was walking along the deck with Arthur Gilmer Langridge who in his white woolly jersey

and breeches looked as if he might melt like a snowball in that daily warmer March sun, "Ogilvie here is trying to make out I spin tall yarns "

"He does? Why, isn't that too bad of him?" she exclaimed, but behind her prodigal smile John noticed the briefest flash in her brown eyes of—was it contempt for Wacey or resentment against himself? Perhaps it was a double emotion

He did not feel he knew Athene any better now than the day he met her in the smoking-room, though he and she and her husband were rapidly nearing the condition of superficial intimacy when the formality of surnames would be dropped. She had that nervous anxiety of so many women never to allow the conversation to flag for an instant lest it should reflect on their reputation as hostesses. Hence intercourse in the smoking-room when Arthur Gilmer Langridge was safely asleep in his berth, was always maintained at a pitch of excitability, with an unbroken flow of small talk, jollying and wisecracks, and yet at the same time curiously damped down by sudden little displays of party manners. In two or three days they had gathered round them the bunch which most English people are lucky if they gather in two or three weeks, and there used to be a jovial gathering every night before dinner and an even more jovial gathering after dinner until beyond midnight. One of the difficulties with which the male members of the bunch had to contend was Wacey Langridge's success in managing to pay for more rounds than anybody else.

"There's only one way I see, folks, to get the better of him," Mewburn announced. "And that is to play on him the trick Ogilvie played on us the first night out. This Smart Alec Britisher found out from the steward what we were drinking before he joined our table, and arrived with his round before he asked us what we would take. Some ante!"

John noticed Athene give a quick nervous glance at her husband, as if she feared lest Mewburn's remark might imply a criticism

"A Britisher has to take his own measures to be upsidese with you Americans," said John quickly

"But that's no use with Langridge I caught him out yesterday telling the steward that all the drinks were on him because it was the anniversary of his wedding-day But that didn't go with me, because he'd already told me he was married in April "

"I bet your life Langridge thinks every day's a wedding anniversary," said Harry Garroni "And I don't blame him Here's to you, Mrs Langridge And, George! Bring the same all round again Drink up, boys and girls I'll give you Mrs Langridge "

"Why, Mr Garroni," protested Miss Claudia Sharpe, a smart woman in her mid-thirties with a classic profile and laughing eyes, at once completely American and completely European, a woman whose shrewd observation of people and life John had only just discovered as a great addition to his daily promenades "Mr Garroni, if you think you're going to make me tipsy and cause one more scandal in this perfectly good ship, you're wrong "

"Why, if I could make you tipsy, Miss Sharpe," Garroni beamed across the table, "I'd be Little Mr Bright for the rest of the voyage "

"Parla Italiano, signore?" she asked

"Sissignorina!"

"I should worry," she murmured, with a wink at the company

In the early dusk of a blue March evening the *Princess Sophia* passed close to San Miguel in the Azores, and as the air deepened to sapphire steamed on beside cliffs as rich and moist a green as ferns in a shadowy grotto

"Europe again," John exclaimed to Athene Langridge, who after seeing her small son safely to bed had come on deck in a green overcoat which almost exactly matched the island that was gliding past

"Europe again," she repeated, and something in her tone made him think there was a regret at the back of those two words

"You're not sorry?"

"Why no, John I'm just terribly thrilled"

"Yet, you're so essentially American"

"I wonder if that's meant to be a compliment or a reproach?"

"A great compliment," he said quickly, for she was beginning to get that startled deer expression into her eyes, throwing them in every direction except the person she was speaking to, which was a sure sign of Athene's embarrassment "I can't think of anybody who more perfectly expresses the youth and grace and buoyancy of America Now, don't look so startled, Athene It just passed through my mind when you said 'Europe again' that you were regretting your own country I'm rather regretting it myself"

But so near an approach to reality as this in conversation was too much for Athene

"I suppose the bunch will be waiting for cocktails We'd better go right along"

And a few seconds later she was herself again, John told himself with a touch of resentment he would have found it difficult to explain, secure in the crosstalk and wisecracks and ceaseless chatter of the bunch and alive to nothing except the duty of keeping the party going

Next day pacing the deck with Claudia Sharpe John asked her point-blank if she had ever got very far with Athene Langridge

"I mean in the way of really intimate friendship," he added "You've stayed with them in Italy I wish you'd

explain her to me No, you needn't cock a wise eye I'm not falling in love with her "

"I wouldn't blame you, angel child Athene's a lovely woman "

"I'd call her a lovely girl She may be twenty-three and married, but she seems to me about eighteen, and Wacey in spite of his mundane experience not much more I know him better, but he's much easier to know Or am I misjudging Athene?"

"Poor Wacey," Miss Sharpe murmured "He's still kind of half-asleep and afraid to let himself wake up in case it's only a dream and he isn't married to Athene at all He's still walking away from the Gilmer house on Peach-tree Street after being asked for the I don't know how manyeth time by Athene's father on what he thinks he's going to keep Lawton J Gilmer's eldest daughter as Lawton J Gilmer's eldest daughter has a right to expect she should be kept A fierce Southern gentleman is Lawton J Gilmer To his notion they're still marching through Georgia, and he doesn't like it at all "

"You know them at home in Atlanta?"

"I've known them both ever since they can remember, and pretty near as long as I can remember," she replied "Wacey's grandfather came South from Maine after the war, and old Colonel Gilmer—that was Athene's grandfather—didn't see why a blasted Yankee should come down to Atlanta and open a big store at the expense of local commercial enterprise Old Langridge made good, but he remained a Yankee to the end, and his son went to New England for a wife So Wacey in spite of his Southern drawl and Southern ways is a Yankee in Lawton Gilmer's eyes, and it still makes him mad to think that his own daughter should go against family tradition the way Athene did "

"She must have been very much in love with Wacey," John declared

Miss Sharpe did not reply at once

"Why, yes," she said at last, "I think she liked Wacey quite a lot, but there's a difference between liking a good-looking young man who's wildly in love with you and comes across the ocean at regular intervals to tell you so, and being married to that good-looking young man and wondering when he's going to give her the pleasure of showing folks at home that Athene Gilmer knew what she was doing when she chose Wacey Langridge. I think that's all she worries about. I don't have to tell you that Wacey's a dreamer, and dreaming on an allowance from Father isn't our notion of making good in my country. And the less Wacey does the more anxious Athene is for nobody to notice he's doing nothing. So far Arthur Gilmer Langridge is the justification of her marriage, and you can see what a responsibility she has made of him. Athene won't give herself a chance until she can stop fretting about this. The only serious attention she gives to herself is devoted to her outward appearance."

"The result is remarkably successful," John observed.

"It certainly is. All the same, I wish Wacey would wake up and realize he *is* married." She was silent for a moment or two. Then she exclaimed abruptly, "Oh, I'm afraid marriage makes me feel melancholy."

"I agree with you," said John fervidly.

"It's so often a falsification of everything. I suppose the whole existence of people like ourselves who can move through life on a comfortable plane is a falsification, but institutions like matrimony rub it in. I suppose we shall get shaken up from below the way things are going, but the sad thought is that when the working classes are in control of the comfortable plane they'll start the process of falsification all over again. But look here, I didn't come out on deck to talk 'isms' at this hour of the morning. We shall reach Madeira the day after tomorrow."

This announcement cast a sudden chill on John The next port after that would be Naples

When the *Princess Sophia* had passed between the Pillars of Hercules into a milky blue Mediterranean and the mountains of north-west Africa were cloudy shapes along the southern horizon, he became obsessed by the desire to see a nautilus sailing across this placid sea He told Wacey Langridge and Claudia Sharpe that he was thinking out a new play, which gave him a chance to avoid deck promenades and allowed him to pore over the ship's rail for many hours of these last days of motionless progress Years before, his mother had read him some tale about a nautilus by which a Greek sailor stranded on a rocky islet in the Aegean had sent a message which had led to his rescue Certainly, a most fantastic story, but the description of the nautilus spreading a rose-flushed sail above her pearly shell and floating away upon the dark-blue Aegean waves had remained in his memory as an ideal vision Later on he had found ammonites' 'horns' in the chalky cliffs of Kent and had learnt at the St James's School Field Club that they were a kind of nautilus And then there had been Captain Nemo's wonderful submarine ship the *Nautilus* which had cruised so luxuriously those twenty thousand leagues under the sea At last there was a faint chance of beholding a nautilus with his own eyes, and no doubt it was in his anxiety to escape from thoughts of the difficult time with Gabrielle at last so very near that he concentrated upon detecting somewhere in that expanse of smooth water which dimpled like a river as the ship steamed through it majestically that elfin seafarer the nautilus spreading his minute sail None appeared Sardinia came in sight, these southern slopes of the island seeming even in March already sun-smitten and arid On the slopes above the low-lying coast-

land the round towers called *nuraghe* were scattered like the honeypots children knock out in sand from their toy buckets

There was a grand final party in the smoking-room that night, the last of the leisurely voyage. It began before dinner with champagne cocktails which John could have kicked himself for not thinking of ordering before Wacey Langridge. However, he did order a great bowl of iced punch in the depths of which he was nearer to seeing a nautilus sailing than anywhere on the milkyblue Mediterranean. The iced punch was such a success that Wacey ordered another, of which other members of the bunch would only consent to drink hearty if they were allowed to order a third bowl.

"Now, see here, John Ogilvie, if you don't come and stay at the Allegra with us this summer Athene and I are going to feel pretty sore," declared Wacey Langridge. "We will, won't we, dear?"

"We most certainly will. Oh, pardon me, Mr Apthorpe," she murmured.

John laughed. All the evening Athene had been politely asking pardon every time she stretched in front of anybody for a biscuit or a sandwich, and what was more every time anybody stretched in front of her, and now when she had upset a full glass of punch into the statistician's lap she was saying 'Oh, pardon me,' in exactly the same party voice.

"And see here, Mr Apthorpe, and this goes for you, Mr Mewburn, and for you too, Mr Garroni, we'd like to have you come to the Villa Allegra, Citrano, any time you feel you'd like to come. Isn't that true, dear?"

"It certainly is, Wacey. Come right along any time, Mr Mewburn, and you too, Mr Garroni. And, Mr Apthorpe, if you don't come and stay with us at Citrano I'll think you're sore at me for upsetting a perfectly good glass of punch over your perfectly good tuxedo."

One had a vision of the bunch growing ever riper through lustrum after lustrum of Mediterranean sunshine That by this time to-morrow the members of it would be scattered without the least likelihood of ever again finding themselves all together was unimaginable in this warmth of companionship The close association of a voyage lasting twelve days uninterrupted by letters or news had restored the golden age, and that they would not endeavour by every means in their power to maintain this state of primal amity was scarcely credible even to him whom experience had long ago taught the peculiar briefness of voyagers' friendships

Next morning the *Princess Sophia* was proceeding dead slow along the steep northerly coast of Ischia, for the world was a silver mirror clouded by breath, which dissolved in bright patches about its surface to reveal for a moment the colour it obscured before it was clouded over anew Drifting beside the ship were fishing-boats, their lateen sails limp, their crews luxuriously idle and as still as bronze The water was deep like the nocturnal sky, starred with flecks of spume, and where it was stirred by an oar would burst into blue flames So close was the ship to the shore that one could see the workers in the terraced vineyards and old women riding to market on donkeys along the cliff paths A fisherman began to chant a song of the sea, no tuneful Piedigrotta lay, but a descant that was old when the Greeks first settled on this isle of Pithecusa, old when Aeneas sailed between these coasts from Troy, old when Minos ruled in Crete

"Were you ever in Greece?" John turned to ask of Claudia Sharpe who was standing beside him looking over the rail

"Just in Athens once for two or three days And, my dear, I had bedbugs in my hotel room as large as tortoises,"

"Even they won't keep me away from Greece much longer," John avowed

After an hour or so of this scarcely perceptible progress past the northerly coast of Ischia the silver haze was melted by the sun. The *Princess Sophia* went full steam ahead. Ischia was left astern. Naples gleamed white across the Bay. At noon the ship anchored off the quay, and amid the din of the Immacolatella Nuova the companions of twelve days bade one another farewell and scattered to drive to their various hotels or the railway-station where the casual examination of first-class passengers' baggage had been rapidly carried through.

John had half expected that Gabrielle would be on the quay and had dreaded meeting her for the first time in front of his fellow-voyagers after this separation of months, but as soon as he saw the port he knew that no separation would expose her to waiting about for anybody in that din. Presently his cabin steward brought him a telegram.

Viens vite je t'attends Hôtel Bertolini

Gabrielle

John had arranged to have his heavy trunks sent to England. Two suitcases and a small dressing-case held all the attire he had with him appropriate to this sunny Southern spring. During the long drive to Bertolini's Hotel up the winding Corso Vittorio Emmanuele the comparative quiet after the noise and confusion of the disembarkation lay heavily on him, and there was a moment after the *carrozza* had turned into a steep winding drive when he was on the point of telling the *cocchiere* to go to the railway-station instead of to Bertolini's Hotel. Perhaps if he had not made such elaborate arrangements to send on his heavy luggage to England he might have surrendered to this impulse, but the thought of reaching London in perhaps icy early spring weather, with nearly all his suitable clothes on the way round by sea, checked

him A few minutes later he was sitting with Gabrielle on the terrace of the hotel drinking a particularly well-mixed dry Martini under the shade of a great orange-and-white parasol, the classic view outspread some three hundred feet below in sublime chromolithography

"Listen, John, I have been so intensely practical I arrived three days now in Naples We had horrible weather until we were nearly in Rome, and the road from Rome to Naples, my dear, it was execrable! Really I find these Italians quite prehistoric for their ideas of what a road must be for autos Such dust, such holes, such foolish oxes and mules *Enfin*, that is nothing," she exclaimed, putting a white emerald-ringed hand on his, and letting her voice drop to a caress For a moment those lustrous grey-green eyes of hers sought his, and he, lured by them out of the mood of uncertainty and demur by which the future with Gabrielle had been seeming beset, responded with quickening heart, so that their glances mingled and they floated far from the clink and chatter of this sunny terrace upon an ocean of lambent grey and green and blue "But please listen, John As soon as I have arrived in Naples I have driven to Sorrento in case I could find a villa because we will be so much more *chez nous* in a villa than staying in one of the hotels full of Germans and English tourists calling out 'wunder-schon' and 'very nice' And if I did not find a villa in Sorrento I said I would find one in Amalfi or Capri But I have found a perfect place for us by good fortune empty at the last moment So I was able to hire it quite cheap until the end of April for 500 francs, *chers*, which is a real occasion And what do you think it is called? You know how I love emeralds? And it is called Lo Smeraldo! It is near the cliff with a marvellous view of Vesuve across water of a blue you cannot imagine, but that is to the north On the south there is a terrazza with columns looking over a little garden of lemons and oranges, and

covered with a *glycine* how do you say that in English?"

"Wistaria"

"Oh, my dear, so beautiful Even Victorine who is always a little tiresome if one is more than ten minutes from Paris is extremely enchanted And Aristide has found a garage with which he is so very pleased *Alors*, when we have had our lunch I think we can go *tout de suite* My baggage is already there I left Victorine in the villa yesterday And we have a cook And what a cook! A boy of sixteen, *et beau, mais beau comme Narcisse*, but also a real *chef de cuisine* who merits the *cordons bleu* It is of course perfectly what Victorine wants to keep her in a good humour She annoys herself with Aristide who is a Josephine and thinks only about his Panhard"

"And what is the beautiful young cook's name?"

"A poem itself Giacinto"

"It all sounds entrancing, Gabrielle"

"*Tu es content? Dis-moi*," she murmured

"Very happy"

And he spoke sincerely, for he had yielded to this unity of weather and scene and womanhood

"Parthenope rediviva!" he ejaculated

Her slim dark eyebrows were arched in a question.

"Parthenope was a famous siren whose tomb was once an object of veneration on the shores of this bay 'What song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture,' Sir Thomas Browne observed, and I shall hazard that Parthenope sang some lay similar to *Torna a Surriento* Come along, let's have our lunch, and start for Sorrento as soon as possible"

In the dining-room John caught sight of Claudia Sharpe and stopped at her table to greet her She was the only fellow-passenger he saw She was staying for a

week at least at Bertolini's and had not decided where she would go after that

"I do so enjoy surrendering myself to the sun and letting him take me where he chooses," she told John, those quick laughing eyes of hers which were always so unexpected with that fine but heavy profile looking beyond him to where Gabrielle had taken her seat at a table "I'm going to be abominably inquisitive, but surely I recognize that very beautiful woman surely that must be Gabrielle Derozier or I'm seeing ghosts?"

"It is Gabrielle Derozier"

"But of course she played in your play when it was running in London last year Lucky author and " the slightest pause "lucky man What an exquisite actress!"

He rejoined Gabrielle

"And who is your friend, John?"

He had wanted to introduce Gabrielle to Claudia Sharpe, but Gabrielle was apt to be difficult with women she met for the first time, and he had thought it wiser to take no risks

"She was travelling in the *Princess Sophia*"

Gabrielle picked up the menu

"She's a great admirer of yours," he added

"Darling, I am not now quite so very much excited to be told that"

"I dare say not Nevertheless I think it's a mistake to take admiration too much for granted"

"And so you are giving me a little reprimand, yes?"

"Not at all I'm merely expressing an opinion I've not been so long before the public as you, but I hope when I have been I'll still be able to hear with a certain amount of gratification that somebody likes a play of mine"

"It is not at all the same thing for a dramatist as for an actress You do not go to see your play every night You

hear the applause perhaps two or three times I hear it every night."

"Not at *Les Vierges Sages*," John reminded her, with an unmalicious laugh

She set down knife and fork and gazed at him tragically

"Oh, my darling, what I have suffered from that play! Figure to yourself that every night but every night, my dear, the first three rows of the fauteuils were full of the most absurd women in shirts and fracs just like men, my dear, and some with collars and short hair. The rest of the audience did not go to see me act at all, but to see these comical degenerates *lançant des œils* at the young women on the stage. What I went through to hear that cruel laughter of Paris! It was impossible to continue. I was making a complete fool of myself to act in such circumstances to a public which had paid to see a part of the audience not me. Never, never have I been so humiliated."

"And now you're going to play Joan of Arc in a film?"

"*Quoi donc?*"

"I was just remembering that she was another *garçon manqué*," he laughed

Gabrielle's expression froze with dignity

"Really, I can see nothing for laughter in that. *Bien sûr* the English have always made bad faces at Jeanne d'Arc."

He laughed irrepressibly at this

"There are so many times when I cannot understand the English," Gabrielle observed severely, "even if I may have an English mother. This English laugh is like a stupid child's. I remember when Willette in *Le Rire* has made a caricature of Queen Victoria taking a bath of blood during the Boer war all the English were quite enraged."

"Naturally. They regarded Queen Victoria not only as a dignified emblem of Britannic majesty, but also as a

most venerable old lady, and they would not have liked to see her taking a bath even in ordinary hot water "

"*Nous autres Français* do not like to hear Jeanne d'Arc mocked "

"Dearest Gabrielle, I wasn't mocking at Jeanne d'Arc "

"You have compared her to a *Lesbienne* *J'ai bien entendu* "

"*C'est ça Tu n'as pas bien entendu* But I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, and if I did you must forgive me I'm sure my rather obvious little joke wasn't good enough to spoil our first day together for seven months "

They were friends again, but he was thinking that unshared laughter was more estranging than the sea and she was thinking that it was high time he was back from America and once more impressionable to the civilizing influence of France

"You must not become a barbarian, John," she lectured "In general Englishmen are the worst lovers in the world, perhaps because they are emotionally at ease only with dogs But you were so sensible "

"You mean what we call 'sensitive' What you call 'sensible' we call 'reasonable' And even 'sensitive' has acquired a suggestion of over-sensitiveness "

Gabrielle shook her head

"You see, that is what I tell you The English are incapable of expressing the emotions with at all any exactitude How can they then be good lovers when that is so? *Pourtant*, you were different I am so afraid for this influence of America on you That must be more barbarian than England "

"American men are the slaves of their women," he pointed out

"But that is altogether odious If there is one man I despise it is the man who abases himself for a woman Oh, I would prefer greatly to wag my tail for an Englishman "

John managed not to laugh this time

As they passed out of the dining-room Gabrielle threw a quick glance in the direction of the table at which Claudia Sharpe was lunching. He contented himself with a friendly wave. He did not want any more arguments for the present.

The great light-green Panhard driven by the reputedly ascetic Aristide in a fawn livery swept almost as majestically through the noisy eastern suburbs of Naples as the *Princess Sophia* through the small craft of the port. On through Barra and Portici and Torre del Greco between garden walls and houses and factories all the way. Strings of drying *maccherone* everywhere. From time to time they would overtake a clanging electric tram. On through Torre Annunziata to Castellamare, and at last an escape from the loudest buzzings of the human hive working at the base of Vesuvius and in perpetual danger of being smoked out. The first view of Piano di Sorrento.

"How beautiful, how beautiful it is!" she cried.

The golden air of afternoon which, steeped in a fragrance of orange- and lemon-blossom and fruit, met the cooled air coming from the sea, and that mingled sweetness and saltiness to which was added the smell of dust from the road and of hot leather from the open hood of the Panhard and the scent with which Gabrielle had lightly sprayed her clothes expressed to John's fancy the quint-essential perfume of desire. He caught her hand in his. How foolish to tease a lovely woman, how still more foolish to argue with her, to argue with a creature as typical of nature's bounty as Flora. The dead Romans who once frequented this paradise—Antoninus Pius, Agrippa, Pollio, even the Divine Augustus himself—they would not have argued with her.

"Of what are you thinking, John?"

"I was wishing I were a Horace to celebrate you worthily."

She bade Aristide drive on, and the road ran presently between high garden walls stained with damp, ferns and fumitory and yellow wood-sorrel growing in the cracks and the earliest musk-roses breaking into creamy blossom here and there along their sunny tops

Lo Smeraldo was reached by a narrow cobbled alley between high walls up which the car could not be driven

"It is a pity," observed Gabrielle, looking at the cobbles and then at her shoes "But one cannot have quite all the world at once, and it is hardly more than a hundred metres "

At the end of the alley they reached an arched wooden door in a high wall, above which the name of the villa was carved on an inset marble tablet

"I find this door quite as *feerique* as the door of the palace of *la belle au bois dormant*—how do you call her?"

"The Sleeping Beauty "

"*Oui, c'est ça* And look, there is a bell on a chain on which we must pull hard to make the gardener hear us I have a key, because there is a Yale lock, but I want you to see this old man who is a true type Hark, I think I can hear somebody who comes "

The door was opened by an old man whose face was furrowed like a peach-stone

"*Ben arrivata, signora,*" he piped exultantly

"Pasquale!"

"*Commandi!*"

"Prego " but here Gabrielle's Italian failed, and she proceeded to tell him in French with an 'o' or an 'a' affixed to the end of an occasional word to go and take the luggage from the car Pasquale must have grasped what she wanted, for wiping his hands on his trousers that were almost as wrinkled as his countenance, he set off down the alley

"I like to spare Aristide to carry the baggage when I

can, because I think it gives Victorine too much power to order him about, and for him who has always played Josephe with her it is too much of a pleasure to do that *Alors*, how do you find our refuge?"

The door opened on a pergola of slightly convex columns of whitened stucco which ran between two small boskets of orange-trees to a flight of stone steps on either side of which stood an old terra-cotta oil-jar in which succulent plants were growing. The steps led up to a spacious rectangular terrace three sides of which were bounded by the rooms of the villa and the fourth side open to the south above the garden, with a view of the olive-wooded Sorrentine hills, one of which was crowned with a calvary, a sign that it had belonged to a Camaldolese congregation. The terrace was paved with glazed grey-green tiles almost exactly the colour of Gabrielle's eyes. John wondered if she had noticed the likeness, but decided not to call her attention to it in case she might not care for the comparison. Above the terrace was a stout framework round which coiled the python growth of a great wistaria now in the full splendour of its bloom, the racemes hanging down like mauve lanterns from the leafless boughs.

"Here is your room, John," she told him, opening a white door in the right-hand wing of the house. He passed through and saw that the windows looked out on a balcony and beyond to Vesuvius above a sea of indigo. There was an open grate in which a fire of chestnut-logs was burning palely in the sunlight entering through the opened doors. The floor was tiled with porcelain in a design of white lilies on a buff ground. The furniture of chestnut-wood had a sun-bleached look.

"And this is my room, John," she told him, opening a white door next to his and revealing a room exactly similar save that Victorine had deprived it of that empty sun-bleached look with dresses and petticoats and two majolica bowls of deep cramoisy China roses. Neither spoke for a

moment, and then Gabrielle said softly, eyeing the flowers

"These roses are our two hearts, *mon amour* It was so clever of Victorine to put them so But she has so much understanding of what will give me great pleasure that sometimes I am quite astonished Come now and see our *salone* "

The sitting-room occupied most of the centre of the villa French-windows opened on the terrace and on the farther side two arched windows looked over the bay with large french-windows between them These gave egress to a smaller terrace, delightfully cool no doubt in the height of summer, but at this season of the year and time of day chill and somewhat depressing in spite of the view

The smoky cap of Vesuvius had caught from the rays of the westering sun the colouring of an apricot and appeared as substantial as the mountain itself, the sides of which ploughed by lava were sharply lighted up to give the huge cone a fan-like chiaroscuro of greenish-gold

The furniture of the *salone* was mostly of heavy dark oak, utterly inappropriate to the surroundings

"Ibsen must have left it here," John laughed "I think he did write *Ghosts* in Sorrento "

"The furniture is always the same in these villas *meubles à louer*," Gabrielle said "And it is not surprising, because old furniture must be put somewhere if it is not burnt Yet with all this ugly old antique rubbish these chairs are comfortable *Au moins*, there are plenty of rugs which is a good thing, because these tiled floors are horribly cold "

They went on to look at the little dining-room, dreary by day, but when lighted up with red-shaded electric lamps no doubt agreeably intimate Along one wall ran a sofa covered with red rep which gave the *salottino* the air of a *cabinet particulier* in a restaurant

They passed on to the kitchen where an absurdly good-

looking boy in a cook's hat was fanning the charcoal in a tiled stove watched by the dainty Victorine who had the superabundant chic of a French maid in a musical comedy

Giacinto straightened himself and received Gabrielle's smile of welcome with a ceremonious bow

"It is a pity he cannot speak French," Gabrielle murmured to John, "for I am sure he would have so much to say" And she asked Victorine if she had managed to learn any Italian yet

"Oui, madame, un petit peu"

"J'en suis sûre," her mistress commented with a smile, and told her to go and see to the valises, which would have been brought up to the villa by now

"She is so discreet, my Victorine," Gabrielle said to John when they were back in the *salon* "She did not wish to interrupt our arrival"

With what was almost a shock of dismay John realized that he had not yet taken Gabrielle in his arms upon this day of their reunion The moment he should have done so was when she had likened those bowls of red roses in her room to their two hearts It would be idle to excuse his own lack of demonstrativeness on the ground of discretion It would be wiser to appear not to have noticed the implication of her remark about Victorine Yes, wiser to claim when he took her in his arms to-night that he had wished no half-embrace to mar the perfection of their utter surrender one to the other for the first time after so long a separation Fortunately the sound of luggage being brought in saved him from any need to justify his lack of impetuosity, and before dinner he turned the conversation to films and the future of films, which gave Gabrielle so much to talk about that premature love-making would have seemed like an attempt to dam the flow of her egotism's limpid brook

Just before they went off to change for dinner he went

across to the windows and pulled back the heavy brown plush curtains to look out at Vesuvius. The mountain was now dark as a grape against the steely northern sky, the sullen glow from the crater visible. There was a menace about the scene, for the moon was not yet high enough to cast a glimmer upon the stark outline of the coast and the chill of winter seemed to linger in this fading twilight. He pulled the curtains close again and turned gratefully to where Gabrielle was sitting beside the fire of crackling logs in the warm radiance of an old-fashioned standard-lamp with a pink petticoat shade.

"Darling, how delicious you look sitting there! Tell me, shall we sit beside the fire in your room to-night before" "he paused, eyeing her

"*Si tu veux*," she answered, casually it would have sounded had not her eyes outshone the soft rosy light in which she sat

"*Si je veux!*" he cried "*Tu sais bien que je veux, Gabrielle!*"

"I thought perhaps you were tired of our love"

He plunged across the room and sat on the arm of her chair

"I think I've been feeling shy ever since we met at Bertolini's this morning," and when the long kiss was given and with quickened pulses he stood up on the hearth-rug, looking down at her, he was so absolutely convinced he had discovered the true reason for his seeming coldness that she too was convinced. When they strolled arm in arm along the terrace toward their rooms a large yellow moon almost full was bouncing clear of the olive-fringed hill and the fragrance of the orange-blossom mingled with wistaria and musk-rose exhaled itself more sharply sweet upon the colder night air

Gabrielle was full of laughter at dinner, and Victorine waited upon them with an *empressement* that recalled the great confidantes of the old drama, of whom the Victorian

age by destroying the intimate relationship between master or mistress and servant had robbed England, but who in the more conservative Latin countries still flourished

Even the fiasco of *Les Vierges Sages* was now primarily a matter for mirth

"I was furious at the time, my dear, but even in my fury I had to laugh at those ridiculous women in fracs, sitting there like old men at a *café concert* and trying so hard to hold their monocles in their eyes I can assure you I had no idea that there were so many of them in Paris Here and there, yes, but this was a regiment For my part I would make them all conscript and put them in a fortress on the frontier to frighten away the Germans I cannot at all understand a woman being like that, but if I could be like that myself I would not dress in a frac and wear a collar *Ah, non, par exemple*, I would be *femme* and *archifemme*, because if it is better for women to make love with women, the more women they are the better for the love I find a woman in a stiff shirt-front you say?

I find such a dress for a woman quite without poesy If two women in such a dress *s'embrassent* it must be as noisy as to crack nuts I find it very wicked to make love comic I think perhaps that is the English of me, because you do not laugh at love in England We laugh too much at it in France"

"Well, you know, I think the French are right," John said "After all, a Frenchman takes his love-making seriously enough, but he does not inflict the serious side of it upon the world at large He doesn't even admit the world at large to share his domestic life The Englishman is stand-offish in a railway carriage, but if you make friends with him he always wants his wife and family to share the friendship I prefer the Latin way You can know a Frenchman intimately for years, and his wife will remain, as she should be, an abstraction Marriage is infinitely more tolerable that way"

"Marriage?" she repeated, and as she looked at John across the table, he thought, 'My god, I'm nearer to marriage than I've ever been'

"But that is not to say marriage is tolerable even in that civilized way," he added quickly, so quickly that in his nervousness he upset his glass of alleged Capri wine, and Victorine had to be summoned to bring him a clean napkin

"After all," he went on, "these ridiculous masculine women these ridiculous women" he repeated, for he wanted to use the absurdity to cover up the topic of marriage he had so rashly introduced in the way that Victorine was covering up the wine-stained tablecloth, but for the moment he could think of nothing to say about them "these ridiculous masculine women are not ridiculous to themselves They are taking love too seriously, which is what you think ought to be done"

"But to go crackling about in a stiff shirt-front, with perhaps the hair cut short and their big stupid eyes being made more stupid with monocles is to make love extremely imbecile, and *enfin*, I did not make Lesbian love imbecile when I acted in Varenne's play, but it is I who must be laughed at"

"Now, darling, don't work yourself up about it again Your first instinct, which was that the play could not get across, was right You let yourself be overpersuaded, and the result was disastrous No audience will laugh when they see you as the Maid of Orleans, even if the cinemas are crowded out with male impersonators Nobody will suspect *you* of *gougnottage*"

"John," she gasped, "where have you found that word?"

"I heard it some years ago in France"

"But it is not at all a polite word I must tell you"

"I know it isn't, but I thought we were *chez nous* Victorine has gone off for the dessert"

"Who told you that word first?"

"A little Parisienne whose best girl friend had just been lured away to that state of life by one of your crackling Lesbians "

"Were you very fond of her?"

"Very fond indeed for a week we spent together at Pornichet "

"It is strange "

"What is strange?"

"The little stab of jealousy "

"Darling, isn't that being rather exaggerated?"

"She was French I would not be at all jealous of an English girl "

"But, Gabrielle dearest, I told you once that the first girl of all was French I've told you about Odette in Geneva Anyway, I think retrospective jealousy is a sad waste of emotion I never fall into glooms about your love affairs before we met, and some of them were much more serious than any of mine Surely you at twenty-seven and I at thirty can enjoy love without romantic agonies about our pasts "

Victorine came in at that moment with the dessert When she had retired again Gabrielle announced she had a confession to make, a confession she had been wanting to make for a long time, but had always lacked the courage

"You're not going to make *me* jealous of the past," said John, defiantly peeling an orange

"No, it is of myself not of my lovers that I must speak I am not twenty-seven I am " she hesitated, and at the last moment kept two more years in reserve "I am now thirty "

John looked up, amused at her embarrassment

"Well, naturally I supposed you must be about that as you'd told me you were twenty-seven Twenty-seven is the recognized age when women take a long rest before going to become thirty A woman clings much too hard to

twenty-five ever to admit to twenty-seven when she really is twenty-seven. It was Balzac who put the woman of thirty on the emotional map. Isn't it amazing to think that his claim for the superiority of the woman of thirty as a subject for romantic treatment over the girl of eighteen was once considered revolutionary?"

"So you don't mind that I am thirty?"

"Why should I mind? As a matter of fact I believe you still haven't reached your prime. I read recently that thirty-three is a woman's age when youth, passion, and experience meet in a perfect trinity."

"But it is the future, John. When you are forty I also will be forty. And please do not tell me that a woman at forty has nothing to worry about."

"Yes, but think, dearest, how long you'll remain thirty-seven. Why, with your exquisite skin and that Titian hair which responds so much more ardently to a henna-shampoo than light-brown locks to camomile, I shouldn't be at all surprised if I were forty-five before you were thirty-eight."

"So at any rate you can look forward to me at thirty-eight. *C'est déjà quelque chose!*"

"Gabrielle dearest, must we celebrate with mathematical speculations this delicious evening? I'm so particularly anxious to enjoy this leisurely European present after the violent present of America. You are thirty, I am thirty. We have April in Sorrento before us, not to mention several days yet of March. If we must talk of the future, let's talk of the plays I want to write and the parts you want to play. Let's plan a super-film. Or best of all let's make love. But first of all come and sit by the fire and sing to me, my Annette, my only Annette."

She let him pull her up from the table and take her to the armchair under the pink petticoat of a lampshade that diffused such a becoming radiance, and he sat on the faded Persian rug at her feet, his head in her lap, while she sang

to him in that low mezzo-soprano of hers which made him feel his own heartstrings were being played upon like a violin the incomparable old songs of France

"Oh, my lord," he groaned at last "Adelaide Orme!"

"Who is she?"

"That lovely brittle blonde who murdered my Annette"

Gabrielle laughed, and her laugh was like a phrase of music from one of those old French songs

"This is what I dreamt of in that infernal hotel, dreamt of staring at an engraving of the Bay of Naples on *the* most hideous wallpaper imaginable I even used to read Alfred de Musset and bedew the pages with as many tears as he shed himself And now sing me Mignon's song

*Connais-tu le pays ou fleurit l'oranger,
Le pays des fruits d'or et des roses vermeilles?"*

And this too she sang, drawing from him emotion as the dews of night drew a maddening fragrance from the orange-groves

"Am I really here?" he whispered, when her voice was silent

"Give me a cigarette I think I deserve one"

"Darling, you deserve Vesuvius itself to smoke," he declared

"Do I grumble and make as much fire as that?" she asked, with that warm laugh of hers

The moon was already westering when John closed behind him the door of Gabrielle's room and walked out on the terrace A raceme of wistaria brushed against his face He jumped as at the touch of a cold hand A brief tremor of wind rustled the roses It was as if they had sighed Night was turning in her deep sleep before the first grey of dawn He shivered and went back to his own

room, the window of which wide open made audible the faint susurrations of a calm sea

Sleep would not come to obliterate the problem of the future which had been complicated afresh by his surrender to Gabrielle's physical charm. By that surrender the difficulty of breaking with her had been increased beyond calculation. The break should have been made at Bertolini's within a few minutes of their meeting, and before she had had time to reassert that perilous influence over his senses. After all, he had even managed to avoid kissing her, and instead of pressing the advantage gained by such coldness he had ended by persuading her that it had been a piece of self-restraint deliberately indulged to intensify the pleasure of their first embrace. He had told her the story of Keats's putting cayenne pepper on his tongue in order to give an added flavour to the taste of claret he drank afterwards. And now, all too easily he had allayed the doubts which must have been haunting the back of her mind. Oh dear, the readiness with which women accepted the tribute of physical interest as a sign of enduring affection! Yet fundamentally they were aware of the inadequacy of passion. There was never a virgin who did not dread lest in yielding she should lose her lover's respect. Nice girls didn't do that sort of thing. Love which flew out of the window when poverty entered the door flew up the chimney when passion came in, so eager was he to escape. So much for virgins, and indeed for all nice girls who had done that kind of thing once or twice. It was a far different tale with women in the pride and prime of their womanhood. Then if passion dallied at the door love flew out of the window to see what was keeping him so long.

It was unjust to criticize Gabrielle harshly because the radiance of natural desire had blinded her to everything else. She was but one of millions of women who accepted the embers of passion as the test of all that was meant by

the word love, who oblivious of that profound instinct of inexperience gauged emotional sympathy, intellectual parity and temperamental suitability one to the other with a thermometer. Innumerable aphorisms about men and women in their purely sexual relationship had been coined in the verse and prose of every language, all of which emphasized the unimportance to a man of the sexual act compared with its importance to a woman, but humanity continued blithely to ignore such aphorisms as soon as desire was roused. Men still swore eternal devotion, women still smothered their realistic incredulity and humbugged themselves into believing such vows, still measured men's spiritual fidelity by their eagerness to get into bed with them. It might be true that no spiritual or intellectual intimacy could exist between a man and a woman when the idea of physical intimacy was repugnant to either. It might be true that the deepest and richest intimacy followed a physical intimacy which had been put aside before it was outlived. His friendship with Miriam Stern was an example of such an intimacy maintained now for over ten years almost exclusively by letters, because Miriam had always insisted upon the necessity of his never feeling that even as much bodily communion as was implied in sitting or chatting together over cups of tea or coffee added anything to an intimacy sufficiently expressed by a letter when the inclination came over either of them to write to the other. Perhaps it had been the constancy of Miriam to her own theory of the ideal relationship between a man and a woman, from which she had never deviated in practice throughout these years since that night in Cracow, that had made him so impatient of the many women with whom for a little while he had played at love. There were men who went through life tied to their mother's apron-strings and who if they had the sense to remain bachelors seemed to make a success of their emotional life. There

was no doubt in his own relationship with Miriam an element of substitution for the loss of his mother when he was a child, but absolved as he was from any filial responsibility or piety it was in effect a completely different relationship, an unique relationship so far as his experience of other people had hitherto carried him

But his relationship with Gabrielle? That was emotionally a paradoxical business, because the child had been born before the love affair had begun. The child was Annette. It was the embodiment of herself in his own creation with which he had fallen in love, and great actress that she was it was imaginable she might embody other creations of his in the future, in which case it was equally imaginable, indeed it was probable, that he would fall in love with her again with all the ardour of last summer. Meanwhile, however, the play that was floating around in his mind had no part in it for Gabrielle, and thus the only link between them at present was desire. Oh, it was strong enough so far as any link forged out of desire could be strong, but after these weeks in Sorrento it might have worn as thin as it was when he left her last August to go to America. And it was still thin. Why play with himself at dressing up? It was still thin, but soldered by absence to an appearance of strength.

Damn this Balkan upset! If it were not for that he would have gone out to stay with Emil in Mileto. There would be no nostalgia in Asia Minor for Europe even if he did have pneumonia again. What a feeble excuse for lack of resolution! As if he should find it any easier to leave Gabrielle in Sorrento because he had taken a notion to visit a friend in Asia Minor! And the devil of it was that Gabrielle was seriously contemplating turning their liaison into marriage. Disastrous! Yes, it was all very well to lie back in the agreeable languor of satisfied desire and from the flickering shadows of the firelight on the ceiling conjure a fairy-tale future for both of them, in

which he should stand above Rostand and she eclipse the fame of Réjane. The shadows would cease to flicker when the fire died down, and that future was not less insubstantial than they. That Gabrielle was performing a three-act play and starring herself as bride, wife, and mother, would not make it any less mortifying for her if he refused to write the play for her. She was no longer capable of knowing when she was acting and when she was not . . . except of course when making love. That was one reason why she attached so much importance to making love. Then she was her radical self. And if he should wound that radical self, which would be the inevitable preliminary to killing that dramatic self which was playing the part of being married, it might shake her confidence irremediably, and that would mean the end of her as a great actress.

Yet, it might be merely his own conceit which presumed that. No doubt Miriam would assure him that it was. Oh, why couldn't women be content with as much of a man as they were capable of digesting? Why must they emulate the Praying Mantis and try to devour their lovers whole? *'And, I think, mon ange, that when we are married you will write better plays than you can dream to write now'* He had mocked at such possessive and misdirected premature maternity, but she had just smiled the kind of smile that no doubt started with Eve and murmured, *'But yet, mon adoré, I know I am quite right'* Perhaps it was lucky for her that this positiveness, this definitely complacent positiveness, had been displayed while she was combing her hair beside the fire. If she had smiled like that during the agreeable languors of satisfied desire he might have been tempted to smack her. And if he had, she would only have loved him all the more when she had played the ensuing scene of outraged femininity to her own emotional satisfaction. Yet, criticize Gabrielle as he might, his own weakness was alone to blame, and if he lacked the strength of mind to resist such

beauty, such generous, such prodigal passion, he was merely in that position of ignominious greed which hopes to eat a cake and still have it

The golden morning was high when John, still sleepless, walked out on his balcony and stood there for a while looking down at the small bosage of tree-heath between the villa and the cliff's edge, the only piece of uncultivated ground in sight. White violets and crimson cyclamens grew thick under the waxen bells of the heath. A rock-thrush, fluting his snatch of mellow song, flashed in a dark sheen of blue from bough to swaying bough, the solitary sound which broke the Sabbath stillness of the morning. Vesuvius across a sea of palest cerulean was green and translucent as a great beryl.

He was in two minds whether he should abandon the idea of sleep, but the prospect of tired irritability in the afternoon when Gabrielle would be wanting to take a drive decided him to have another shot at sleep, and to the sound of the fluting rock-thrush sleep came to him.

"My dear," Gabrielle exclaimed when he put in his first appearance at lunch, "do you know what to-day is?"
"Friday."

"But, my dear, it is *vendredi saint*. Victorine has reminded me. I am a little horrified. It is not that I am such a good Catholic, but there is a *convenance* in religious matters which I do not like to offend, and I cannot think how I could forget that this is *la semaine sainte*. It is certainly so early this year, *mais, malgré cela* it must be because I have been rehearsing so hard I did not notice *mi-carême* arrive. So, to-night we must go to the great procession, and as it is a day for *le jeûne* I think we will have a little something with eggs when we come back and let Giacinto take Victorine to see the procession."

They spent the cloudless windless afternoon sitting on

the terrace under the *glycine*, and Gabrielle talked of her childhood in Larnay-Mozère, in a mood of pensive wistfulness for the golden age which was no more. John who had expected a recurrence of dreams about the future was grateful to this recession into the past. Besides, it was delightful to listen to her evocation of that far-away time, and to lose himself in pictures of a pig-tailed Gabrielle rushing out in a white frock tied with a big pink sash to greet the arrival of the brass band with the *brioche*—the ring-shaped bun that celebrated the end of the harvest, of Gabrielle walking beside her father in that quiet garden to watch him cut the first Bon Chrétien pear and of her cutting for herself jargonelles which he had not passed as absolutely ripe, of Gabrielle sitting in her rustic summer-house and reading *La Petite Fadette* while the pigeons cooed from the old church tower and the clock drowsily chimed away the hours as if Time's scythe itself were rusty in Larnay-Mozère, of Gabrielle in her best silk dress and high buttoned boots and large chip hat going into Lyons to shop, and of Gabrielle eating sweets and cakes, now outside a *pâtisserie* under the trees along the fast light-blue Rhône, now outside a *pâtisserie* under the trees along the slow dark-green Saône, of the cathedral on the hill like an elephant upside down with gilded pads, of buying silk in the busy Place des Cordeliers for a dress that was going to make her present dress only second-best, of Gabrielle's first Communion on the Sunday after *la fête-dieu* and of breakfast in the town hall on that blazing June day, of Gabrielle fishing for whatever fish in the diamonded stream would be foolish enough to snap at a pellet of bread on a bent pin, and of more serious paddling in search of the little crayfish her father liked so much for his favourite *bisque*, of Gabrielle's capture of a great green lizard with black and yellow lozenges upon its back on the hill above the vineyard that gave the best *cru* of all the wine her father made, and of how the lizard

escaped and was found at last curled up in the *pot de chambre*, and how her *bonne* had thought it was a demon sent to warn her of the danger she was running of hell fire by her neglect of her religious duties during the somewhat feverish progress of committing one of the gardeners to marry her, and last of Gabrielle in the train bound for Paris and fame and fortune and waving *adieu* to girlhood in the year of the Exposition Universelle

"When you were seventeen," said John

"Yes," replied Gabrielle quickly, for even on Good Friday she was not going to surrender those two years she had kept back from Time's grasping fingers

"Fancy, we may have seen one another at the Exhibition I was there when I was seventeen, and at Fontainebleau all that summer "

"I also went to Fontainebleau with a painter who was so much in love with me, but I would not take him for a lover Ah, *je fus tellement ambitieuse, mais ambitieuse!* And he could do nothing for me But do not let us talk to-day of my life in Paris *Aujourd'hui je suis fillette* "

And, thought John, great actress that she was, she could even carry off that not so easy rôle

As they were making their way out of the gate of Lo Smeraldo in the dusk, Pasquale, the old gardener, who would always potter about with his carnations while there was a glimmer of light left, called to them

"*Buona sera, signora, buona sera, signorino! Buona passeggiata e buon divertimento!* "

"I have need of his wishes for a good walk," Gabrielle declared, "for I do not find these horrible round stones at all agreeable for my steps "

In her mood of pious observance she had told Aristide that she would walk to the piazza

"These Southern Italians have a naïve idea of what is and what is not entertainment," John remarked "I

shouldn't have thought a Good Friday procession could be described exactly as a *divertimento* "

"It is the simplicity of true faith," she said "I find that simplicity so touching "

"And it has the merit of being realistic," he added

"No, please, John, I do not wish you to be in a comedy-making humour I am feeling quite solemn, I assure you, although these *galets*—what do you say, cubbles?"

"Cobbles "

"These cobbles are altogether atrocious for walking Still, it is for penitence "

The piazza was thronged with people waiting for what John decided that in her present mood it would be tactless to tell Gabrielle was a survival of the mourning for the dead Adonis transformed by its Christian application

Nothing marred the perfect nocturne of black and silver through which the procession moved slowly It would have been too much to expect Southern Italians to abstain entirely from fireworks on a religious occasion, but they were restricted to showers of silver rain from the windows along the route, and these added to the impressiveness of the scene The crowd was reverent and still, except when the twelve small boys representing the twelve disciples passed bearing their emblems Judas Iscariot, who was the smallest of the twelve and chosen for this unenviable part on account of his bad behaviour in school, was jeered at as he passed, carrying his bag of silver in one hand and in the other the rope with which he would hang himself This unsympathetic reception had reduced the miniature Judas Iscariot to tears and he proceeded on his way, boo-hooing among his eleven slightly sanctimonious little companions—John with his book, James with his club, Andrew with his cross, and the rest of them The *frati di misericordia* in those grim hoods with two slits for the eyes looked more than ever like familiars of the Holy

Office as they moved slowly along with their candles of unbleached wax

*Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
Dum pendebat filius*

The life-sized figure of the dead Christ was borne on a bier, and as He passed a low murmur of pity came sighing from the spectators at the vision of that bloodstained form, which, scourged and crucified and crowned with thorns, appeared by the wavering light of candles and lanterns to be the veritable body of the Saviour taken down from the Cross. The bier was followed by a life-sized waxen-faced image of the Madre Addolorata dressed in the black weeds of a Neapolitan widow, she with her drawn face and her anguished eyes appearing veritably alive.

The procession passed on its way along the narrow Corso toward the Duomo, and the crowd scattered. The *cittadini* and *contadini* hurried home anxious to be off to bed and rise from sleep for that merry Mass of Holy Saturday, to hear the bells ring out again the Gloria and Alleluias of triumphant joy, to see the veils fall from the statues and pictures, and afterwards to stream out from the Duomo and wish '*buona Pasqua*' with goodwill to friends and enemies. The English visitors went back to their hotels, saying to one another that the procession was really quite nice, but what a pity it was that the figures of Christ and the Virgin should look so painfully real, because such realism *must* make for a certain amount of idolatry, and what a pity it was the priests were so common, though the Archbishop himself did look really quite like a gentleman. Perhaps he *was* a gentleman. This was a comforting speculation, and it went some way to compensate for the irreverence of those fireworks of silver rain.

"It's difficult to believe that such a continuity of human worship does not hold essential truth," John murmured. "I wish it were not even more difficult to be sure that it

does I wish I could believe as positively that Christianity is the truth as I believe that certain cruel perversions of it like Calvinism are damnably, oh most damnably wrong. If Christianity is true I believe positively that the Catholic Church is the only repository of Christian truth, but if I accept the truth of the Catholic Church I must reach it through my acceptance of Christianity first."

He was thinking aloud rather than talking to Gabrielle, but when she said nothing he looked round to see if she had heard his remarks. It was then he perceived by the light of the moon that her face was drawn by sorrow and that her eyes were dimmed by tears. He was on the verge of asking if the cobble-stones were hurting her feet when he realized that her mind was remote from this walk back to the villa, that she was indeed following in fancy the first sad procession from Calvary to Joseph's sepulchre. He did not interrupt her dream all the way back, nor did she say a word until they reached the gate of Lo Smeraldo.

"This night has made an extreme impression on me," she declared, leaning against one of the stucco columns in the garden and gazing full at the moon which was illuminating the scrabbles of tears on her countenance. "I have terribly neglected my religion. How I could think that I was able to play Jeanne d'Arc with such neglect I do not know. I must certainly make every scene again, or perhaps not every scene, but every scene where I must show religious emotion. *Écoute, chère*, we must not again make love before we will have decided if we will marry or not. You will be *gentil*, yes, and not try to make me feeble? To-morrow, I shall go to make my confession."

For the next three weeks Gabrielle's mood of spiritual contentment made her the most charming of companions.

They drove to Amalfi and Salerno and beyond to Paestum where the great temples of honey-coloured travertine filled John with a sharper longing than ever for Greece, which on this windless April day seemed such a short distance across that pearl-blue placid sea. They explored Sant' Agata and Cava dei Tirreni, above the winding wooded paths of which Gabrielle wandered happily in rope-soled shoes, her mood of easy felicity extending even to a consent to forgo high heels. They crossed over to Capri in a sailing-boat and were inclined to think like everybody else that they had made a mistake in not coming straight here and letting the rest of this Sirenian land remain unvisited.

"Next year perhaps we will come to Capri for our *lune de miel*," Gabrielle murmured, her eyes peering into the future.

"Perhaps we will," he said, but in such an irrepressibly doubtful tone of voice that she glanced sharply at him. Yet the day was so lovely, the gaiety of Capri so infectious, her own mood still so serene that she did not reproach him for the coolness with which he had received her suggestion.

Then one day Gabrielle turning over the pages of a Baedeker announced that they had not yet visited Citrano.

"Is it particularly worth while?" John asked, for he had been deliberately dodging Citrano. They might run into the Langridges. Gabrielle could be so tiresome about meeting new people, and in any case he was vaguely, not for any explicit reason, but just vaguely hostile to the notion of meeting the Langridges in her company.

"It sounds quite delicious even in Baedeker," she declared, and John unable to think of any plausible excuse for not visiting Citrano ceased to contest the plan. So they drove there next morning, and as soon as the Pan-

hard stopped outside the Albergo delle Sirene his heart was given to Citrano. They had seen other little towns on the cliffs of this Salernian bay, but none was perched so lightly and lovably as Citrano. None looked down upon such a perfect semilune of golden sand. None beheld the islets of the Sirens in such alluring shape. None was guarded against the Saracens on one horned promontory by such an appropriate tower or placed so securely and beautifully under saintly patronage on the other horned promontory by such an appropriate church. None possessed so picturesquely tumbledown a harbour. None was protected against the north by such verdurous heights crowned with primeval beech and chestnut woods, three thousand feet above.

"This is even better than Capri," he averred. "Or rather as good as Capri must have been thirty years ago before it surrendered itself to tourists."

"It is completely enchanting," Gabrielle agreed. They were on the terrace of the albergo, and as it was not yet ten o'clock the morning-glory was not yet faded by the sun and they were gazing down upon a sapphirine cascade of flowers that poured itself over the limestone rocks almost as far as the sand forty feet below. Presently John heard behind them a familiar drawling voice enquiring of the innkeeper what had happened to the vermouth and the gin he had ordered. It seemed he had a number of guests at the Villa Allegra who were likely to expire of thirst unless Augusto pulled himself together *subito* and did something about the supply of drink *subito*.

"*Sissignore, subito, subito!*" Augusto, the triple-chinned double-bellied innkeeper promised. "I senda you *sei bottiglie di vermouth Martini, tre bottiglie di gin Gorrdonn, e due bottiglie di Strega, fra una mezz'ora* I amma so sawry if you hava been discommoded, *ma*."

Out of the corner of his eye John saw the shrug which

from that huge bulk of flesh was ample enough to excuse not only for all that Augusto had left undone in the past but even whatever the weight of responsibility on that vast jelly might cause him to leave undone in the future And then Wacey Langridge caught sight of him

"Why, hulloa, John, here you are at last!" he exclaimed "Only yesterday we were wondering where you'd hidden yourself"

John presented Gabrielle, who was cordial

"Think of my meeting you, Mademoiselle Derozier," he exclaimed, with his charming smile "You know, for the last ten years the first thing I've done when I made Paris was to go right along and buy the best seat left in the theatre and sit there thinking you were the greatest actress in the world Oh, I know you're used to talk like that and I know it bores you quite a lot, but I just had to say it"

But John saw she was pleased by Wacey's obviously sincere admiration, and when he asked them to lunch she at once accepted the invitation

"But your wife, Mr Langridge? Madame may find

"Oh, madame will be enchanted to have you come to lunch You know how enchanted Athene will be, don't you, John?" he added "As a matter of fact we've a bunch of folk coming over from Amalfi, and two more will just make it a perfectly good party But, see here, why don't you come right along now to the Allegra? We were thinking of bathing this morning Our garden runs down to the sea"

He pointed to a white villa on the other side of the beach, with a flight of steps between the usual columns winding from its terrace

"No, no, Wacey," said John quickly "Mademoiselle Derozier and I will explore Citrano and join you at lunch"

"Cocktails on the terrazza at half-past twelve And see here, John, don't take Mademoiselle Derozier exploring too far—she'll find it pretty tiring trailing up and down the steps of our Citrano streets "

"All right We'll be seeing you at half-past twelve, Wacey "

"Sure thing So long *Au revoir, mademoiselle* "

"*Au revoir, monsieur* "

He left them, and as he passed the door of the albergo they heard him threaten Augusto that Vesuvius itself wouldn't make such a mess of the Albergo delle Sirene as Wacey Langridge would if those six bottles of vermouth, three bottles of gin, and two bottles of Strega were not at the Allegra within half an hour

"Quite an agreeable young man, John And his wife, what is she like?"

"A very agreeable young woman I met them on the ship coming across "

"Oh, so little time as that, and you call yourselves already John and Athene That is quite quick, I think "

"Well, you know how easily one gets to Christian names with Americans There's nothing in between extreme formality of address and extreme familiarity "

"And you came to extreme familiarity, yes?"

"We became good friends on the voyage across A voyage breaks the ice "

John thought afterwards that everything might have been all right if Claudia Sharpe had not been staying at the Villa Allegra To her Gabrielle had taken an immediate dislike that morning at Bertolini's, though she had seen no more of her than from the other end of the dining-room, and when she had to be introduced to her she was most obviously *froissée* by the encounter In Claudia Sharpe's expressions of admiration for her

genius she would discern nothing but an attempt at patronage and received them so chillingly that the very cocktails in their glasses grew icier. Athene, sentient that the party was not going well, to her the most tragic event possible except an accident to Arthur Gilmer Langridge, tried harder and harder to neutralize the effect of her two guests' mutual hostility (for by this time Claudia Sharpe finding Gabrielle was being rude had begun to be rude to her) by becoming herself cordial to effusiveness, and John discerning Athene's anxiety had to respond to that effusiveness with the result that after a while he observed Gabrielle's eyes upon him, glacial as those grey-green eyes could be. The bunch of folks from Amalfi made a great deal of jovial noise, but all the jovial noise they made could not persuade Athene that her party was a success.

Almost immediately after lunch was over Gabrielle told John that she was *très fanguee*, and asked him to look for Aristide and tell him to bring the car as near as possible to the gate of the villa. Wacey volunteered to go with him, and John noticing that this suggestion dismayed Athene with the prospect of having the whole of this most uncomfortable party on her hands refused Wacey's company so brusquely that the atmosphere was more uncomfortable than ever.

During the drive back to Sorrento the horizon of the Salernian Gulf southward showed a shallow line of black cloud puffed with white. The air felt clammy. The rays of the sun had a sting.

"*Scirocco, signora Scirocco, signorino*," said old Pasquale when they reached the villa. "*Aria cattiva*."

Not a word had been said by either about the lunch all the way back, and when they went indoors Gabrielle took herself off to lie down. She was threatened with a migraine. Victorine was sent to the Piazza for the only drug that could help, and when she came back with the

news that the drug could not be procured in Sorrento she was called an imbecile. The atmosphere grew more louring. The sky gradually assumed a uniform appearance of dirty cotton-wool. The leaden sea took on a sickly swell. And then the *scirocco* began to blow, lashing the orange-groves, stripping the last racemes from the wistaria and covering the floor of the terrace with faded blossom, rattling the sun-dried window-panes and blistered doors, howling and moaning, and spitting a vicious rain.

John whose exacerbated nerves were prickling all over tried to quieten the stabs by writing a letter to Athene.

Lo Smeraldo,

Sorrento

April 17 13

Dear Athene,

I am so sorry we spoilt your delightful party to-day. I think this southerly gale must have affected the atmosphere. Gabrielle Derozier has a bad headache. She isn't always as disagreeable as that! Perhaps some day we will meet again.

My best thanks, and kindest regards,

Yours ever,

John Ogilvie

He supposed he ought not to say that about Gabrielle, but damn it, she had been disagreeable. She had simply given way to a display of temperament.

As he sealed up the letter Gabrielle came into the sitting-room.

"This wind, this dreadful wind will send me completely mad in a minute," she exclaimed savagely. And then seeing the letter she asked to whom he was writing.

"I was writing to thank Athene Langridge for her lunch and to tell her how sorry I was we spoilt it for her by our bad tempers," John replied.

"I see no reason to write with such stupidity," she grumbled

"I thought it was good manners "

"So now you are to teach me good manners? That I find a little comical, *mon ami* "

"I don't care whether you do or not "

"So I was right to suppose that you have found Madame Athene a very agreeable companion during your voyage, and perhaps also that odious woman who looks like the Louvre Venus with a chipped face, though if the Venus of Milo had gross arms like hers she must be glad they are broken "

John yawned

"Darling, you really are being rather tiresome "

"Please do not think I am jealous," she laughed "No, no, my dear, I am not to be jealous of a few vulgar *Américaines* "

"I'm not going to think anything at all to-night," he told her "Nobody *could* think in this vile wind I'm going to read Strindberg's *Confession of a Fool*, and with that migraine you'd much better put yourself properly to bed "

"Never before, John, have you let me see so brutally that you are wanting to be without me "

"But never before, dearest Gabrielle, have you and I tried to argue when a *scirocco* gale was blowing A wind like this would have made Romeo and Juliet bicker Do go off to bed It's the only place in a wind like this with a headache like yours It doesn't mean I'm anxious to be rid of your company because I am anxious you should look after yourself "

The headache really was too bad even for Gabrielle to sustain a scene She could hardly manage the slow and dignified exit of some forsaken queen in tragedy

By the time John had read a few pages of Strindberg's mad tirade against women to the accompaniment of the

scirocco screaming round the villa he began to wonder if he would not have been wiser to work the situation up to a crisis and take advantage of it to separate finally from Gabrielle. Still, if he had done that he would have felt rotten about it afterwards. After all, she did have a bad migraine, and nerve-racking weather like this was an excuse for anybody to lose all sense of proportion while it lasted. No, that would not have been fair. When the *scirocco* passed and she was herself again Gabrielle would realize how utterly her own frame of mind had distorted everything. They would spend the rest of the month together in the charming amity of the last three weeks, which he must have the strength to preserve and not, no, not on any account, allow himself to resume any other kind of relationship. Then after a week or two in London he would send a cable to Emil proposing himself as a guest for two or three months and from Miletto he would write to Gabrielle and tell her that he simply could not contemplate the idea of being married to anybody and that the only course was for him not to see her again because he recognized her dislike of continuing as his mistress, and it was impossible, such was her fascination for him, to pledge himself not to make love to her. That might not deceive Gabrielle. Indeed, it certainly would not deceive her, but it *would* give her an opportunity to deceive her own pride by accepting it as the truth. And if it came to that it would be the truth. He might have the strength of mind to keep away from her, but if they were together again he should never have the strength of mind to resist always the appeal of that exquisite body. And then resentment against Gabrielle's behaviour at lunch suddenly surged up. Damn it, he would be finished with this blasted state of affairs! He wrote out a telegram to Emil Stern, proposing to be with him as soon as he could reach Miletto. He found a certain pleasure in battling against the black fanatic

wind that was tearing down over the Sorrentine hills and stripping leaves and blossoms from the trees

The following afternoon he received Emil's reply

Better come later home on leave beginning May

So fate ruled out that decisive step

But fate had another plan arranged, and the crisis which John had been grateful to his better self for having had the decency not to precipitate upon that wind-tormented night was in the end brought about in a way he could never have foreseen

The *scirocco* blew for two more days, during which Gabrielle remained in bed, and on the third day died down, giving place after a dead calm to a light wind from the north-west which set the Bay of Naples dancing in wavelets across which small fleets of fishing-boats with lateen sails like the wings of butterflies went skimming hither and thither about their business. In this life-giving *maestrale* the memory of the *scirocco* became as faint as a delirium which has passed. Gabrielle was apparently herself again, and they strolled along to look at the ships and buy a few souvenirs of Sorrento silk that emulated the Roman silk and various articles in that inlaid wood-work called *tarsia*

While he was making his purchases John remembered his intention to send a present from Italy to the telephone-operator at the Picardy Hotel. He could not remember her name, but he had it noted down somewhere, and he took with him back to the villa the two inlaid boxes and scarves he had chosen instead of having them wrapped up and despatched to New York from the shop.

In due course he found her name, enclosed a card in one of the boxes, wrapped up the parcel, and left it to be posted by Aristide when he took the letters. Aristide by mistake did not take the parcel, and when on his return from the post office this piece of negligence was brought

to his notice, with the malicious triumph that Victorine always enjoyed over his slightest slip, the mortified chauffeur put the parcel in a drawer of the kitchen to hide the evidence of his forgetfulness while he was waiting for the post next day. In this drawer, Gabrielle, who being French knew how to combine careful housewifery with the artistic temperament, came across it while looking for the week's laundry bill.

"*Eh bien*, John," she asked, coming into the sitting-room and putting the parcel on the table, "and who is Miss Hesther Sarom?"

"Hesther Sarom? Why, the telephone girl at my New York hotel. I sent her a couple of scarves and some tarts boxes yesterday."

"Which you did not want me to know, yes?"

"I didn't and don't in the least mind your knowing," he said a little irritably, for he was reading Matilda Serrao's *Fantasia* and feeling rather pleased with the rapid progress he had made in Italian, so rapid that he was not stumped for more than two or three words on every page, which did not hold up for a moment his absorption in that ruthless presentation of feminine hysteria.

"Then why did you hide your little souvenir of love in the kitchen in a *tiroir* ?"

"I don't know what on earth you're talking about. I left that parcel with the letters yesterday. I suppose Aristide forgot to post it."

No doubt she would have accepted this explanation, which in any case was easily verifiable, if her mind had not been galled by a doubt of her lover's devotion. But the crystalline air which had succeeded those weary days of self-communion during the *sirocco* demanded from him a responsive clarity. John's recent evasiveness about the future could not be blinked at any longer.

"For what Aristide did *c'est égal*, but you cannot at

least pretend that it is Aristide who is a souvenir of love to this *Americaine* "

"Souvenir of love! Gabrielle, it really bores me when you make such an idiot of yourself I tell you this is a telephone-girl who was extremely obliging to me "

"Oh, I am sure of that!" she laughed bitterly

"Will you shut up and let me finish? She took all my calls for me and never let me down over a single appointment, and for some reason I was too shy to give her a present at the time "

"Too shy? You were too shy, *mon ami*? Oh, that is certainly delicious My dear, you are really inviting me to believe excessively large improbabilities It would be better, I think, to admit frankly that you have made a little love with this telephone-girl Even if I was faithful to you all the time of our separation, I am too much a woman of experience to expect such faithfulness from a man "

"In other words you're calling me a liar?"

"No, but I think you wish to avoid "

"Then you're calling me a coward?" he interrupted

"No, but I think perhaps you have made a pretence with this telephone-girl to make me think that I cannot suspect you for making love with your beautiful Athene "

This put John in a fury

"I am not in the slightest bit in love with Athene I have never dreamt of trying to make love to her For one one thing she's a married woman, and married women are right outside my notion of making love "

"Because you are so *egoïste* that you will not admit a husband's right to your *maîtresse* and so *archi-egoïste* that you will not have the risk of a marriage to your *maîtresse* because she has denied her husband for you and made him divorce her "

"It's hardly worth discussing my fundamental objections

to intrigues with married women, but if we are to start handing out home-truths, shall I tell you why you have suddenly conceived this insane jealousy of Athene Langridge?"

"If you please I shall find it excessively diverting "

"I wonder if you will? This is the reason, Gabrielle You have been indulging in pious aspirations for nearly a month God forbid I should accuse you of acting the part of a woman with religious scruples Let it be considered a genuine spiritual emotion But what so far as you and I were concerned was the chief fruit of this rather sudden piety? No more love-making "

"It was impossible "

"All right I tell you I accept that as genuine Somebody more cynical than I might have supposed it was a well-worn device to make me marry you by refusing me what you hoped I *must* have "

"Oh, but this is *infâme*," she burst in "I will hear no more "

"I've already told you I accepted your religious scruples as genuine But surely you are enough a woman of the world to face up to what so many in that world *would* suppose if they heard our story? However, that's nothing I wish I hadn't mentioned it What I want to make you realize is that from the moment you closed down on our passionate relationship you threw away the only means you had, for all our intimacy, to measure your power over me From the moment you could not judge the strength of our love by the ardour of my passion you were so completely at a loss that you would have been jealous of my patting a dog "

"So that I am nothing better than a lump of senseless flesh?"

"Oh yes, you are something a million times better You are an actress of genius, to whom I shall be grateful all the rest of my life, not merely because her genius gave me my

first success, but even more because for a time she loved me ”

The grey-green eyes glittered dangerously

“You are very clever, John, but you are not clever as you think you can be You have put my love for you into the *présumé* as if because I would not any more ” she broke off with a shrug “But why do you do this? Because you do not love me any more and like a man you wish to pretend it is I who do not love You are *superstitieux* You fear to break off from me and leave behind an angry wounded woman whose hate might bring you misfortune because her love had brought you fortune Perhaps you speak me the truth when you say you have not made love with this telephone-girl Perhaps even you speak me the truth when you say you have not made love with this Athene, though I cannot believe you will not make love with her when you find a way to do so without hurting that *egoisme* of yours But when you try to tell me I only love you when you can be in my bed that is not speaking me the truth ”

“Well, no,” he admitted “That was said to hurt But, Gabrielle, in justice, won’t you admit you did begin to grow tired of me after a while when there was no more actual love-making ?”

“I did not grow at all tired of you, *mon ami* But I began to grow tired of wanting you to be with me for ever and finding that you did not want to be quite so long with me ”

“But, Gabrielle, dearest Gabrielle, you don’t really think we should stay happy for ever if we were married ?”

The grey-green eyes suddenly softened

“I was thinking so, John But I find now it was quite a stupid little dream ”

“You see, you did from the beginning insist that I must always be prepared to be thrown over when you gave the word,” he urged eagerly, pressing upon the gentler mood

"That is certainly true But please, do not try to make me so foolish that I can be blamed because you do not still love me "

"But I do still love you Only I know myself and I know you and I know what the stage is whether for actress or dramatist, and I'd rather break everything up now than break it up after we were married "

"Do not say you still love me, John, because indeed, my dear, that is not at all true Oh yes, perhaps you will still sometimes be quite glad to make love with me, but even that not so much as once upon a time, for I do not think you have such a very profound respect for my piety that after a little you would not have wanted me to forget about it in this poor Smeraldo of ours But I was foolish I should have remembered that even the most precious emeralds have had little cracks in them *Enfin*, it was just an experience which has failed "

"Experiment you mean The experience has been far more precious than emeralds "

"And perhaps that is the last English word you will teach me, John, because to-morrow I will go to Paris "

"And never see me again?"

"Oh, please, do not look so very mournful, because I know your heart is beating so fast with pleasure that it was after all as easy to end as it was to begin "

"Yes, I *am* glad in one way," he admitted boldly "But if I were to write a play for you "

"That is indeed quite a novel and convenient way to pay off an old mistress," she laughed

He flushed

"That's the first time since we met that you have really hurt me "

"But you have hurt me many times more than that, John Do you remember when I said like an imbecile that perhaps we would have our *lune de miel* how do you say that in English?"

"Honeymoon "

"So after all you have taught me another English word And what a funny last English word to teach the woman you were loving, I think, quite a lot once Yes, I said perhaps we would have our honeymoon in Capri, and so coldly, oh, so icily, you have answered 'perhaps' It was a knife right through me, that cold, cold, cold 'perhaps' "

"It wasn't meant to hurt you It wasn't meant to be said coldly It was just that I knew marriage was impossible and didn't want to promise what I knew I could not keep "

She gazed at him, those lustrous eyes of hers brimming over with tears

"Oh yes, I have understood this reason, but that did not make it hurt at all less "

They parted in Rome at April's end, for in the admission that each had been able to wound the other recrimination was quenched It had seemed a pity in that perfumed warmth of Sorrento to go North sooner than they needed, for the account of the transalpine weather was not attractive, and with a hard summer of work before her Gabrielle had yielded to John's persuasion that the villa should not be left empty during the last week of their tenancy Of what use by an abrupt departure to allow Victorine and Aristide to suppose they had quarrelled? Would she not feel happier without the thought that anybody could be speculating what had happened? He could drive with her as far as Rome and share the discomfort of that rough dusty road She might not believe that their love could ever become friendship, but a week of friendship on trial would be little enough to rob from the rest of life

"You are very secure, *mon ami*," she had said with a smile and a sigh

"Secure of what?"

"Secure that this week *will* be one of pure friendship I can learn a great deal from such security Suppose I can still wish to hold you in love? Are you content to meet the danger of having to refuse me and turning this so very English idea of friendship into hatred?"

"But I could not refuse you," he replied quickly "All I can refuse is the folly of marriage"

"Then I am not necessary to your idea of continual happiness?"

"No But neither am I necessary to yours Would you give up the stage to live with me in England on my small private income, or even on the larger income I might make by writing successful plays?"

He had paused, staring for a while at a damp-stained print of gothic ruins on the wall of the Smeraldo sitting-room

"Look back at your letters while I was in America," he had gone on "Page after page filled with plays and parts and audiences and managers Do you think my plays for other actresses would be a substitute? I've been honest at last with you, Gabrielle Be honest with me"

"Do you swear to me it is not because you find yourself attracted by this young woman at Citrano that you are wishing to separate from me?"

"Gabrielle, I have no more idea of Athene Langridge as a mistress than of—than of Victorine"

"It is not to go back to Citrano that you will stay in Rome?"

"If you think that, I will drive all the way with you to Paris Only not having ever seen Rome I decided I would spend a week or so there before going back to England I probably won't go abroad again for some time"

"No, do not come with me to Paris Stay in Rome," she had urged impulsively

So at April's end it was in Rome that they parted

John came back to England at the tail end of a cold bedraggled Whitsuntide to find the farce of party politics running even better than when he had left it some nine months earlier. For the benefit of the Unionist Opposition ecclesiastical comedians were declaring that the disestablishment of the Welsh Church was robbing God and persuading thousands of women to support their contention by marching to Hyde Park with banners. For the benefit of the Unionist Opposition Ulster comedians were importing to Hammersmith Italian army rifles of 1886 which no cartridges would fit. For the benefit of the Unionist Opposition the suspicion that various Ministers of the Crown had done a shrewd deal in Marconi shares was being hopefully worked up to supply grounds for an impeachment, and self-righteous Parliamentary comedians were taking advantage of the privileges of the House of Commons to make assertions for making which in newspapers editors would presently be fined. Feminine comedians were staging a rival show to the Unionist Opposition by such diverse methods of gaining the vote as in the same week poisoning a prize Pekingese dog, putting a bomb under the Bishop's throne in St Paul's Cathedral, and burning down an empty country house near Dundee. Such a display of militancy seemed particularly reprehensible to the Unionist Opposition, which saw no prospect of getting back into power by the violence of such women, so unlike the laudable violence advocated for Ulster.

John went up to stay with his family in Hampstead for a week or two before reopening his own small house in Millbank. The Ogilvies still lived in Church Row, but in a house on the opposite side, a beautiful early-Georgian house with a large garden behind, which Sir

Alexander had bought just before he was knighted in the last Honours List of King Edward VII. He had represented Dunchester in Parliament since 1903 when he had won the seat from the Unionists at a by-election, his arrival at Westminster being one of the first cracks that gave warning of the Unionist landslide in the General Election of 1906. He had had hopes of becoming Solicitor-General in the Liberal Ministry of 1910, but Sir John Simon had been preferred, and Sir Alexander who had never been really ambitious politically did not worry. Now close upon sixty, he looked handsomer than ever thanks to a becoming head of powder-grey hair which it was a shame to cover with a barrister's wig. He was still, with Marshall Hall, the leading criminal advocate of the day, but he had greatly increased his reputation as an advocate in civil actions and stood a good chance of reaching the King's Bench. Elise at forty had not developed, as John when he first saw her feared she might, into a fluffy-chinned faded English blonde. On the contrary she was more attractive at forty than she was when she married Alexander Ogilvie in 1900. Her son David, now twelve and a half, had conferred on her the best gift an eldest son can confer upon his mother by looking exactly like her, for nothing keeps a woman so agreeably young as that, even as nothing keeps a woman so disagreeably young as when her eldest daughter bears too close a resemblance to herself. However, her daughter Prudence had been tactful enough to look exactly like her father. When John arrived at 57 Church Row it was Prudence who led the welcome, a rose of a child with chestnut brown hair in an apple-green linen smock.

"Oh, my god, John, I'm jolly glad you've come in time for my birthday!" she exclaimed fervently, and lest she had not expressed fervour enough repeated, "Oh, my god, I should think I am."

"Prudence darling," her mother protested, "I've told you you are *not* to say 'my god' "

"But mummy darling, you do, and father does, and John does, and David does, and "

"I dare say we *all* do, but *you* are not old enough yet "

"Oh, hang age!" Prudence ejaculated "But I'll be ten the day after to-morrow and that's double figures at last, thank god "

"Prudence, listen, I'm serious," said her mother "You are not to use the name of God at all in that casual way No, I mean it, and that's enough "

"Well, David "

"I don't allow David to do so either "

"Well, he does He's always saying 'Good god almighty, Prue, you *are* a damned ass' "

"Shut up," John intervened "David's away at school and can't defend himself, and as the daughter of a K C and the granddaughter of a judge you jolly well ought to know that hearsay evidence is not allowed "

"Dear John, do listen! Will you take me to the theatre on my birthday? I want to go and see Gerald du Maurier in *Diplomacy* because he's much much my favourite actor I like his sort of squashed nose We all seem to have rather large noses in our family, and it's such a refreshing change "

"All right, I'll take you to *Diplomacy*, though I don't think you'll care much for it," John promised

"Ha-ha! You didn't dare to say I wouldn't understand it, like Miss Peachey Oh, my oh, my *goodness*, what a woman!"

"Prudence!" her mother exclaimed sharply

"I said *goodness*, mum "

"You're not to talk about Miss Peachey like that If you do, I shall send you away with her to Grandmother's for the rest of the summer "

Prudence cast a speedwell-blue interrogative eye at her

mother, decided she meant business, and abstained from argument

John enquired after David, to take the conversation into safer channels for his young stepsister

"Well, I think he's all right He's going to Eton next year Isn't he lucky? But mummy won't let me go to St James's Girls' School I'm frightfully fed up about it "

"What on earth do you want to go to school at all for?" asked John

"Well, I get so bored with Miss Peachey She treats me like an infant "

Elise intervened again

"Now, look here, this question of your going to school won't arise for at least another year, Prudence You can talk it out with John when he takes you to the theatre on Saturday And now cut off to Miss Peachey and tell her you can come to tea in the drawing-room *But* back to the schoolroom you go if you don't behave as *I* like, not as *you* like "

"Oh, three cheers, thanks awfully, mummy But need Miss Peachey come to tea in the drawing-room?"

"Certainly she must come to tea "

Prudence exhaled herself from the library on a long puffed-out sigh

"Your father has a conference in the Temple, and he won't be back till dinner-time, John," said Elise "How lovely to see you again! And it was sweet of you to come and stay with us for a few days before you go back to your fascinating little house by the river You look ridiculously young for thirty, John "

"So do you for "

"Yes, forty, but it's not nearly so bad as I thought it was going to be "

He was thinking how well black became her and what a pity it was that Englishwomen did not realize the advantage of black as well as their Latin sisters did

"I was grieved by your father's death "

"Poor old sweet But he reached eighty, and he died peacefully at the end of the Long Vacation without having missed a day in Court from the time he was first made a judge He had a very soft spot for you, John "

"I regarded him with veneration Nobody has ever tolerated my chatter with such equanimity "

"John, it's a most cowardly confession to have to make, but do you know, I'm beginning to be a little overwhelmed by Prudence "

"I don't think you need be There's bound to be a big change in children," he reassured her "Prudence is *enfant du siècle* "

"Yes, but what's going to happen to the century? Do you feel as if the life we were all leading at present wasn't real, but just a haphazard dream before some horrible awakening?"

"I sometimes feel it's a waste of time to think about the plays I'm going to write, or rather to bother about success, because a huge war is coming which will make it necessary for the people of my generation to begin all over again But that's mostly when I'm tired Actually I do not believe a war will come We've talked about it too much recently, and if this new complication threatened in the Balkans is got over I think we shall be able to feel fairly safe I read to-day that the Austrians were releasing their reservists who were called up last autumn "

"Oh well, *che sarà sarà*," Elise sighed

John's optimism was somewhat damped as he was sitting with his father over the port that night, not by any pessimism on the part of the member for Dunchester, but on the contrary by an excess of optimism which to his mind seemed to border on fatuity

"But, my dear father, you will talk as if the only thing that mattered was party advantage And at that game the Unionists, who have inherited a tradition of unscrupulous-

ness from Disraeli, can make rings round you poor Liberals ”

“You’ve ceased to call yourself a Liberal, eh? You were enthusiastic enough in 1906,” Sir Alexander reminded his son

John remembered the desperate appeal from Louis Matheson for transport in his attempt to win the Tory stronghold of South-East Kensington from Colonel Yarborough, and how he had borrowed Elise’s brougham and dressed himself in livery, their own coachman being down at Dunchester driving for his father, to convey numbers of senile Gladstonians to the poll. And Matheson had been elected. Indeed, he was now one of the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries and might hope to be in the Cabinet when the next vacancy occurred. Yes, when the result had been declared and Colonel Yarborough had turned a patchy white and purple at the shock of his defeat, he had felt like a St George slaying the Dragon or David getting home on the forehead of Goliath with the stone. It was the end of reaction. The country had roused itself from the stertorous sleep of Unionism. Dawn was breaking at last.

And now in the tones of disillusionment he was replying to his father.

“Yes, because I thought the huge Liberal majority would have the courage to act without regard for its future as a party. But when it sat helplessly down like an old woman with too many parcels to carry, I realized that what I had thought was a revolution was actually nothing better than a convulsion. But never mind about me. What about these criminals who are working up this Ulster business? By George, Johnson was right when he called patriotism the last refuge of a scoundrel ”

“Well, no doubt this wild talk of civil war is most deplorable. But I think it’s only talk ”

“Then why does the Government allow it? Why don’t

you clap into gaol Carson and Bonar Law and F. E. Smith and Captain Craig and the rest of these Primrose League mountebanks, and find out if they have the guts to go on hunger strike and be forcibly fed? But not you. You're afraid of making martyrs of them and losing votes. You don't mind making martyrs of women because they haven't got any votes to give you. You disestablish the Welsh Church. An excellent proceeding if it were inspired by a lofty motive. But what is your motive? Votes. Votes. The Welsh Methodists and Baptists will vote for you at the next election. You want to abolish plural voting. Why? Because most plural voters are Conservatives. You see the country drifting towards a European war, but you take no steps to prepare for it because if you do prepare and there isn't a war you'll lose votes. You haven't even the imagination to see that flying has come to stay, and one of your fellows, the Minister for War, I think it was, gets up in the House and announces that we can't get on with flying in this country as well as they can in France and Germany because it is so hilly and so windy. Really, Sir Alexander, I ask you."

"I wonder you don't stand for Parliament yourself," said Sir Alexander, with a tolerant smile, passing the port.

John shook his head.

"What chance has a non-party man of doing anything even if he could find a constituency to elect him? By the way, I see the second reading of a Home Rule Bill for Scotland is due next week. What line will you take?"

"Oh, I expect I shall vote for it. A second reading means very little. It's practically no more than an academic discussion. The Bill will probably obtain a majority. But the Government is unlikely to take any further steps in the matter. Irish Home Rule is as much as we can manage at present."

John agreed sardonically

"And what about war?" he asked "I was forgetting that you ought to have better information than the general public about the probabilities "

Sir Alexander sipped his port appreciatively

"The feeling on our side of the House is that the Opposition are making political capital out of this question of national defence Undoubtedly, the situation in Europe *has* been getting steadily worse for some years, and undoubtedly there *is* a war party in Germany, but I've lived through so many scares, and my own opinion is that no nation will take the responsibility of precipitating what nowadays might be, and indeed probably would be a very much bigger business than most of us realize "

"All the same, unless a country has statesmen instead of politicians at the head of its affairs it can't afford to take risks," said John "Unless our statesmen can guarantee us against being involved in war against our will, it is their duty to ensure that we are ready to be involved "

"I'm not so sure of that A programme of insensate rearmament may do more harm than good to the cause of peace And that reminds me What would America's attitude be, do you think? I suppose we can count on their support?"

"I doubt it very much English people forget that America stretches quite a long way west and south of Boston "

And then they talked about John's impressions of America, to which his father listened much as if he were some mediæval traveller like Marco Polo returned from a land of fantasy

Next day he went to see Miriam Stern and heard that Emil was not coming back after all for the present owing to the likelihood of fresh trouble in the Balkans between the erstwhile allies This was a disappointment, and in

the unsettled condition of England, so noticeable after a long absence from it, he wished he had not let himself be put off his plan to visit Greece and Asia Minor

"But surely you would find things much more unsettled there," Miriam suggested

"Ah yes, but a definite unsettlement. It's the indefiniteness I complain of here. It makes me feel so restless. The wisest thing would be to pay no attention to politics like the majority of people, but I can't open a paper without being maddened by this meaningless talk. You'd think a man like my father who in the law-courts has come up against some of the harsher facts of human nature would not be content to be drugged into mental comfort by phrases. I suppose if you're a politician or a lawyer or indeed anything except a creative artist all reality gradually oozes out of you in conforming to the rules for success. Your real self has been subordinated for so long to your professional self that it ceases to exist, unless galvanized to life again by some external shock like a woman turning your head or a religion turning your heart. And that happens to very few. I've never heard yet of a politician who was converted to religion abruptly and completely, but one or two politicians have chased after women, and by Jove, haven't they been made to pay for allowing reality to master them for once! I can't help thinking that this slow process of falsifying the ego, or rather of shaping it to glide smoothly forward without grating upon other egos, must render a man incapable of recognizing political actuality. Everything is shaped with the idea of smooth progression. When people come up against a force like this agitation of women for the vote they're completely baffled by it. How any sane man can suppose that he will be able to keep the vote from women is beyond me. Yet my father with all his experience of the law-courts really does fatuously believe that a blithering piece of legislation like this cat

and mouse Act will cure women of poisoning prize Pekingese dogs and trying to blow up the Bow Street magistrate He's oblivious of the passion behind these follies "

"But, John, weren't you considering reshaping your ego to glide smoothly along with your last lady-love when you found she was likely to offer you a rather severer problem in elimination than you had hitherto encountered?"

"But I didn't "

"Thanks to her, not to yourself If she hadn't forced you into a positive attitude you would have left herself and yourself floating in unreality You would have been telling me this afternoon you had not had the heart to tell her it must all finish, and you would have been moaning because women could never accept reality I don't see how you can expect politicians to do what you cannot do yourself We all play for position "

"Yes, I suppose we do," he sighed "And I suppose the reduction of Christian morality to a system of mutual accommodation can be defended as a civilizing influence Nevertheless, it will have to be paid for soon or late when the great majority of human beings wake up to the fact that they have been excluded from this system of mutual accommodation This demand by women for the vote simply cannot be dismissed The agitation will not die down It is not being sustained artificially in the interests of a political party like the Ulster business "

"And yet I'm not sure that giving women the vote will make for the general good," she argued "From the moment women have the vote the popular Press will think it worth while to pander to them, and that means a more extensive corruption of the common mean than is going on already "

"I wonder whether the Press corrupts the public or whether the public corrupts the Press I remember

when the first number of the *Daily Mail* came out, and thinking at last I'd found a readable paper. I was thirteen at the time. I believe more harm is done by papers like *The Times* and *Punch* and the *Observer* and the *Spectator*. I'd sooner have plenty of air with a commonplace view than a fine view without any air."

"I think the malady lies deeper than any expression of it in print or speech. Sometimes I feel Emil is right and that we shall soon be watching the death-throes of a social system."

"For which he prepares by joining the executive of the old order," he observed sarcastically.

"We are all in our various ways helping to maintain the old order. Who get the best seats for your plays, John?"

"Ah, but I'm not out to destroy the old order. I'm merely exasperated by the way in which it is setting out to destroy itself. Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. Just after I went away last year the Orangemen started a riot at a football-match in Belfast and dozens of people were injured. Forthwith *The Times* printed some doggerel by a windbag of a professional poet to celebrate a glorious victory. That long-chinned playboy Carson was being escorted round Ulster like a Fifth of November guy with bodyguards in khaki, dummy cannon, and an imitation Red Cross Ambulance. At the same time leaflets were being circulated calling on Germany the great Protestant Power to come and save Ulster from the Pope! The way things are moving in Europe their call will be answered soon. Then my bold Carson is presented with the orange flag under which Billy the Dutchman—mark the train of thought from Billy the Dutchman to Billy the Prussian—and without blowing his nose on it he hands it back to the donors, after which he and the rest of his company of melodramatic clowns—Scots, alas, the greater part of them—having signed a covenant to resist the rule of

Ireland by the Irish, sail back to Liverpool on a steamer called the *Patience*. The horse-droppings are swept from the ring. The tent is taken down. The circus is closed. I come back nearly nine months later and find all the leaders of the Opposition still running about the country at large, letting off squibs like a pack of snotty little street arabs, but preaching 'gunpowder, treason, and plot' themselves. And these same fustian conspirators have the impudence to approve the forcible feeding of women!"

"But, John, I thought you were always in favour of action."

"So I would be if I thought these party politicians would come within range of a bullet. But when the firing starts they'll be sponging round their constituencies for votes. General Carson! General Bonar Law! General Balfour! But the only general in command is General Election. I don't particularly want to shoot some poor bigot of a Presbyterian farmer in County Down, and that's all there'll be to shoot at."

The *matinée* of *Diplomacy* at Wyndham's Theatre was a great success, but even more successful was the tea to which John took Prudence afterwards at Buszard's.

"I don't believe I've been here," he told her, "since your mother and I had tea once after a *matinee* before you and David were born."

"Did you have ices, John?" his small sister asked.

"I take it that means you want an ice?"

"Well, I would rather."

The bleak weather of mid-May had abruptly turned into blazing heat.

"Which are you going for—strawberry, vanilla, chocolate?"

"Well, do you think perhaps I could have all three

mixed and perhaps a bit of lemon as well? Or I suppose I couldn't have one of each?"

"I think that sounds rather excessive. You don't want to collapse with frozen jim-jams when you go home and then never be allowed out again without Miss Peachey?"

"Oh, my god, no! My gosh, I mean."

"But I don't see why you shouldn't begin with a strawberry and lemon," John suggested. "And follow up with a chocolate and vanilla. And then if you'll take my advice you'll have coffee in the Viennese style with a sort of whipped cream on top, and don't forget to keep an odd corner for the Genoese cake which is pretty good here. We can call at a chemist's on the way home."

"Call at a chemist's, John?"

"Yes, to get you a pill."

"Miss Peachey takes a pill every night," Prudence announced. "And when she takes one she makes a noise in her throat like a dying duck in a thunderstorm. That's my best birthday present."

"What, seeing Miss Peachey take a pill?"

"No, you stupid. Having my own room. To-night I'll be sleeping by myself. I'm awfully glad. So would you be, John, if you slept in the same room as Miss Peachey."

"Why? Does she snore?"

"No, but she's always fussing about in front of the glass. I nearly always wake up when she comes to bed, and sometimes my tummy aches trying not to laugh at her. I say, I do love Gerald du Maurier. He was awfully good as Henri Beauclerc, wasn't he? And I liked Owen Nares as Julien Beauclerc. I wish I could be an ambassador," she sighed deeply. "It's frightful to be a girl. You can't be an ambassador or a judge or an admiral, or anything that's really fun."

"By the time you've grown up perhaps you will be able to, if women get the vote."

"I don't see why they shouldn't get the vote, do you?"

"I see every reason why they should "

"Oh, good for you," she cried, clapping her hands
"Miss Peachey says the suffragettes ought all to be shot "

"Very bloodthirsty of her "

"I know But she's awfully silly like that The other day I told her it was a pity she wasn't Eve "

"Why? Was she walking about with nothing on?"

"No, you silly ass She doesn't even walk about the room in her corduroy bloomers I mean because she's so unenterprising I jolly well bet you Miss Peachey wouldn't have eaten the apple She's funky of snakes Once at the Zoo the boa-constrictor put its head up and she scooted out of the snake-house like anything "

"What did Miss Peachey reply to your remark about herself and Eve?"

"She gave me Wordsworth's Sonnet on Westminster Bridge to learn by heart Oh, John, you must persuade mummy to let me go to school "

"It would be much more useful to persuade her to find you a more sensible governess "

"But I don't suppose any governesses are sensible, are they?" Prudence asked sceptically

"Of course they are Any amount It's a matter of finding them If that's your only reason for wanting to go to school I consider it inadequate If I had the educating of you I'd send you next year to a family in France, and the year after that to Austria, and the year after that to France again, and the year after that to Italy, then to Sweden, then to Greece, then to Italy and Austria again and finally to France once more, by which time you'd be eighteen and fit for anything and anybody Even Girton or Somerville couldn't turn you out true to type "

"Would I come home in the holidays?"

"You'd have three months in England every year "

Prudence finished off her first ice in silence

"Well, I wouldn't mind that if Miss Peachey never comes back after her summer holidays," she declared at last "But she's so depressing She is really, John When I asked her the other day to talk about what I was going to be, she screwed up her mouth and said she hoped I was going to be a good woman Now, isn't that a silly thing to say? As if you could be anything else when you're grown up!"

"And what *are* you going to be?" her brother asked

"Not a lady doctor," Prudence decided with a shudder "And I don't want to get married, because there isn't anybody I'd like to get married to among the boys I know Except perhaps David But I don't think brothers and sisters can marry Or can they by special act of Parliament? Besides, David likes a most awful girl called Inez Hume-Dornton who lives in Well Walk He met her at a party for over twelve and gave her the hoise's rib I found last summer in the field behind Uncle Duncan's garden "

"That was rather cheek of David to bag your rib "

"I know But he said Inez Hume-Dornton was going to be a lady doctor and collected bones and I didn't 'Pouf!' I said, 'you'd better give her one of your own rib bones like Adam did Eve ' "

"You're very well up in the Book of Genesis It seems to be your chief source for comparative illustration "

"Well, I'm going to have an exam in Scripture at the end of this term My god, I hope I answer every question right and make Miss Peachey feel most frightfully small My gosh, I mean I wonder why mummy won't let me say 'my god'? She says it herself quite a lot The other day she said to father, 'My god, Alec, servants really can be damnable when they like' And father's always saying it Just before we came out he said, 'My god, I hope they haven't burnt yesterday's *Westminster* I'd marked a paragraph I wanted to cut out ' I hope mummy isn't going to

stop me saying 'my gosh', because I must say something And, my gosh, isn't this cake jolly good? Oh, cheers!"

"What for?"

"That's the largest piece of candied peel I ever found in a cake," she exclaimed, holding up the trophy between small sticky finger and thumb "And I do so love candied peel John, do you think if you asked her, mummy would let me come and stay for a week-end with you in your house?"

"She might, but I think I'd find Miss Peachey a bit heavy after you'd gone to bed "

"Oh, you silly ass, not with Miss Peachey By myself, of course You see, there's a girl lives opposite to us in Church Row called Margaret Hetherington and when I asked her to tea last Saturday she said she couldn't come because she was going away to the country for the week-end And I thought she was being beastly conceited about it She's always very conceited, because she's eleven and six weeks now And I want to show her I can go away for a week-end "

"We'll try what can be done But can you dress yourself and all that sort of thing? I don't want to have to pin up your petticoats and such-like "

"John!" she exclaimed in protest "Of course I can dress myself And you don't pin up petticoats "

"I think it might be managed," he said "We'd go to the theatre on Saturday afternoon and if you promised to keep your yapping little mouth shut we might manage another theatre in the evening, or the White City perhaps And on Sunday we'd go to the Zoo I can always get Fellows' tickets "

"Would I have to go to church?"

"No, I should think we'd both be too tired "

"Oh glory! John, you simply must make mummy be sensible and let me come "

"Will you give up the idea of going to St James's Girls'

School, cease to find parallels for Miss Peachey's life in the Garden of Eden, and abstain from saying 'My god', in every other sentence?"

"Oh, I'll do anything, John, if I can come to you for a week-end," she promised in a rapture

"Right What do you want to eat now?"

"I think I'm full," she told him regretfully

John succeeded in persuading Elise to let his small sister spend the coveted week-end with him, and as they were driving down to Westminster on a Saturday in mid-June, Prudence reduced to silence by a fullness of emotion more powerful than the fullness of ices and cake which had overcome her three weeks earlier at Buszard's, they met the funeral procession of Miss Emily Davison, who had died of her injuries after running out at the Derby to try to stop the King's horse at Tattenham Corner. Thousands of women, dressed in black or white or purple carrying peonies and lilies and irises, were moving in solemn procession to the sound of Dead Marches and the Marseillaise. Purple banners swung sombrely. Maidens in white with laurel-wreaths and led by a woman with a cross walked in front.

"Won't even this convince them?" John exclaimed. "Look at that procession, Prudence. In a few years you will hardly believe that there could have been a time in your life when such a procession was rendered necessary by the cowardice of politicians."

He explained to her what had happened.

"But she was rather a silly to run into the horses, wasn't she?" Prudence suggested.

"She was offering herself as a martyr. She believed that women should be set free. So she didn't mind doing something that the rest of the world would think silly."

"When father was addressing his constituents at Dunchester while you were away a woman threw a banana at

him and hit him on the nose, and he said when he came home, 'these mad suffragettes are really impossible, one of them hit me with a banana to-night,' and mummy laughed. I don't think she could help it, but I think father was a bit waxy with her for laughing. I told Miss Peachey it was a jolly good shot, and she said my remark was disgusting. I only said it because I knew it would annoy her."

"Shut up now, until the procession has gone by," John said.

It was a full week-end. A matinee of *Mr Wu* at the Strand Theatre gave Prudence so many thrills that it was fortunate John had the White City's exhausting physical thrills with which to tire her out in the evening. On second thoughts he had decided not to let her off Sunday morning church, and so took her to Westminster Abbey.

"Clergymen have awfully silly voices," she observed pensively when they were walking back along Abingdon Street. "But I liked the singing. Only I wish ladies and gentlemen didn't smell so unpleasant."

"It's an article in the creed of respectability that the working class is the one that smells."

"Oh, but they smell of human beings. I don't mind that. It's the smell of the inside of wardrobes which I hate, and veils, and soapy soap. I know!"

"What?"

"I know what they smell of. Mince!"

"Mince?"

"Yes. Poor people smell like roast beef, but people like us smell of mince. Sort of warmed up and all the goodness cooked out. I hate mince, don't you?"

"Loathe it."

"Three cheers! Miss Peachey simply adores it."

In the afternoon they recovered from the depressing effect of the smell of massed respectability by sniffing the ranker odours of the Zoo, and the evening was made

memorable for Prudence by being allowed to sit up to late dinner

"I wish it wasn't June," she sighed

"Why?"

"Because it's still light, and this is the first time I've ever had late dinner, and if it were dark I'd feel it was much later "

"Never mind Look at the moon rolling along behind Lambeth Palace "

The ancient pile across the river was glowing in the reflection of a rich sunset, and from a flamingo-feathered eastern sky the moon almost full floated above Lambeth as unobtrusively as a pale cloud

"It looks just stuck on like a stamp," Prudence said

After supper they sat on a window seat at the open window, listening to the murmurous talk of passers-by dallying against the parapet of the Embankment and the splash of water when barges which had been unloading higher up the river swept past on the swift ebb of the spring tide The lamps glittered The low primrose moon was southing

"It *has* been a lovely week-end," Prudence sighed as she took John's hand sentimentally "I'm awfully glad I'm ten now I don't suppose I could ever have had a week-end like this when I was nine "

"Back to Miss Peachey to-morrow," John rapped out with mock severity, for he too was feeling rather sentimental, wishing this slim rosebud of a child could stay for ever thus and never be full-blown, and wondering if he would ever have a daughter galloping through girlhood when *she* thought she was moving more slowly than a snail "Talking of being nine, it's after nine now You'd better cut off to bed "

"Must I?"

"Yes, because if you go back to Church Row a wreck, that'll be the last week-end you'll ever spend with me

I'll come up in ten minutes and read you a scene or two from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Try as he might John could not resume life in London where he left it off when he sailed for New York at the end of the summer before. The return of the Russian Ballet to which he had been looking forward so eagerly was a disappointment. Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* was galvanic while one was sitting in the stalls of Drury Lane watching it, but not galvanic enough to make supper at the Savoy afterwards any more significant. Chaliapine singing in *Boris Godounov* was galvanic, but once again only while one was at Drury Lane.

Discussions with well-known actors and actresses about possible plays and big parts for them over lunch at Verrey's or Cavour's or Pagan's led nowhere, because from the moment John began to think of a play in terms of some particular actor or actress it never seemed worth writing. Now that he had enjoyed a success it was much more difficult to be unaware of the various writers who had not yet tasted success. Promising young dramatists, promising young novelists, promising young poets, promising young critics pullulated everywhere. Grub Street had become a fashionable thoroughfare.

In a desire to escape from this atmosphere of aspiring fecundity John returned to his idea of writing for the films and was introduced to the man who had the reputation of being more open to new ideas than anybody else in the British film world. The meeting with Mr Herbert Clarence was celebrated with the usual lunch—at the Café Royal this time—at which were present besides Mr Clarence himself two of Mr Clarence's 'yes' men, Mr Capper and Mr Loft. Before the meeting took place John had been regretting more than ever his failure to visit Hollywood, on the supposition that the leading spirit of the

successful Clarence Century Films would have been keenly interested to hear from an intelligent observer a report on developments there. He soon discovered that Mr Clarence was keenly interested in nothing except the sound of his own voice, to which his two 'yes' men paid servile attention. Lunch was nearly over before John managed to let Mr Clarence know that Pathe were doing a big Joan of Arc film and to ask what he thought were the prospects for a super-film on some great English figure—Elizabeth for example or

"Joan of Arc?" Clarence cut in. "Didn't Joe Hewetson try a big Joan of Arc film?"

"No," said Mr Capper, using the negative for the second time since they sat down to lunch. The other was when he refused a glass of wine in case his host did not want to order a third bottle. "No, Mr Clarence, that was Jane Shore."

"Joan of Arc, Jane Shore. It's all the same. Yes, and you can put the same letters after both, Mr Ogilvie N B G. In fact you can write N B G after any costume film. The public don't want costume."

"I'm sorry to hear that. I was hoping I had some good suggestions to make. The Mutiny of the Bounty was o.k. My idea was, instead of spending money unnecessarily on elaborately faked scenery, to go out to the South Seas and do these South Sea Island films on the spot. You'd have to build or rather adapt some old sailing-ship to the 18th century, and then do several films with it out there—say the Mutiny of the Bounty, Treasure Island, and perhaps a couple of stories specially written to suit your cast and the local setting."

"He doesn't want much," Mr Clarence observed to his satellites.

"He certainly doesn't, Mr Clarence," Mr Capper agreed.

"He wants a jolly sight more than we can give him,"

declared Mr Loft, who had a notion of himself as John Blunt, and when Mr Clarence was out of earshot would over a double whisky with a splash often brag of the home-truths he had handed out to Herbie Clarence

"You're looking at films from the wrong angle, Mr Ogilvie," Clarence declared "You're an author Very nice too You had a nice run with a play at the Mercury I didn't see the play myself, but I'm told it was a very nice little show But a cinema audience isn't a theatre audience Ask Capper Ask Loft Ask anybody you like in films You'll get the same answer every time You want to write for the films And why shouldn't you? No reason at all so long as you realize that before you start writing for the films you've got to forget all you know about the theatre And the same applies to the actors and actresses You're suggesting I should take a company out to the Cannibal Islands What do I want to go to that expense for when I can run a company down to the South Coast, stick half a dozen palms on the beach, and send my audience home feeling they've seen more of this wide world than they knew existed? Did you see our Foreign Legion film? No? Well, I suppose that was one of the biggest money makers ever put out in this country And did we go to the Sahara? No, old man, we went to Southport You'll get all the sand you want at Southport But I'm not trying to discourage you, Mr Ogilvie You may be the man we're all looking for We want men with ideas What are they doing down at the studios to-day, Capper?"

"The suffragette comic," he was informed obsequiously

"Tell you what we'll do," said Mr Clarence, "we'll take a run out in my car to Finchley and show you the film from the other side of the silver screen"

The Clarence Century Films Company's studios were not impressive They resembled a couple of large decrepit greenhouses held up by corrugated iron and weather-boarding, outside which an auction was to be

held of all the old junk in London. Inside on this July day the heat was unbearable, so unbearable that Mr Clarence suggested shooting one of the scenes out of doors. He was told that all was ready for the scene in which the suffragettes were to work at mending a road under the supervision of policemen, the point of the satire being that as they were demanding a man's privilege they should be punished by doing a man's work. A dozen actresses made up and dressed to resemble scarecrows, with the purple, white and green sashes of the Women's Social and Political Union were driven off with half a dozen heavily moustachio'd policemen to a recently built road of small villas at Dollis Hill. Here they were set to work to be funny with spades and rakes and pickaxes on the as yet unmetalled surface.

"I'll tell you what, wouldn't it get a big laugh if one of them has to be smoking a clay pipe?" Mr Clarence suggested, whereupon Capper was so much overcome by laughter that he fell into a ditch dug for the main drain and won a hearty and genuine laugh from his employer.

"Topical!" Mr Clarence commented to John, who was feeling acutely embarrassed by the hideous vulgarity of this satire on contemporary life. "And laughing at what people want to laugh at."

"Yes, I understand. You aren't going to have the scene at Epsom where that woman ran out among the horses?"

"But that woman was killed."

"I know. But I thought you'd think that rather funny," said John, so gravely that Mr Clarence failed to observe the mockery in his eyes.

"Well, I suppose it is funny in a way. Not being killed, I don't mean, but rolling over under the horses. And of course you'd get a leg show that way. Still, I don't think we could put it in. Some of the audience might remember what did happen, and the cinema audience is getting very squeamish over some things."

"Really? You astonish me "

"Oh yes, you see, you'll get a lot of people at the films who think it's wrong to go to a theatre Old-fashioned Nonconformists and religious people And we've got to remember that their money is as good as anybody else's So we're keeping the pictures clean When we got going first, eight or nine years ago, we used to put out some very saucy single reels, but we found they didn't do the business any good in the end, and I suppose the cleanest entertainment in the world to-day is supplied by British films "

"Like this suffagette comic," said John

"That's right But we haven't got a title for it yet Can you think of something snappy?"

"How about 'What men are capable of'?"

Mr Clarence shook his head

"That doesn't tell 'em what it's about Men might be capable of anything I thought of 'Women must work', but that doesn't quite suggest a comic I've got it! 'Milling the Militants' Lovely! Capper! Loft!"

"Yes, Mr Clarence? Yes, Mr Clarence?"

"I've got the title we wanted for this film 'Milling the Militants' "

"Beautiful," declared Mr Capper

And Mr Loft had to admit that it certainly was beautiful

"I've got the title for you, girlies," the great man shouted

And the girlies who were wondering if they stood a chance of being engaged for Mr Clarence's next production thought *Milling the Militants* was lovely

"Well, by jingo, I'm glad we took a run out here this afternoon To-morrow morning you ought to be able to shoot that road-making scene," Mr Clarence told the producer, a greasy-faced young man who seemed to think that a grey sweater and much-stained flannel trousers

offered the ideal attire for rushing about and yelling in the sun

"Yes, topicality That's what we want for the pictures nowadays," he continued as he led the way back to his big Daimler "With all this armament how-d'ye-do, spy pictures are going very strong Did you ever try your hand at a spy drama, Ogilvie?"

John felt the dropping of the 'Mr' betokened a sudden warmth towards him for having assisted at the accouchement of his title Thus will women confide in a monthly nurse

"Yes, the public's gone mad about spy-pictures If you can think out something, give me a ring on the telephone and we'll have lunch together and see if there's anything to it One thing, though, you've got to remember We can't pay you authors what you screw out of the theatres "

"What would you pay for the scenario of a spy-picture you accepted for production?"

Mr Clarence waggled his head

"You see the author's name doesn't matter, that's where it is Still, we could get a bit of publicity out of a successful dramatist writing a special play for the pictures Well, I'll spring £100, and that's twice as much as I've paid any author yet "

"I'll think it over," said John

And it did not require much reflection to decide that moving pictures in England had not advanced far beyond the magic-lantern and the stereoscope After that interview with Mr Herbert Clarence it required ardent faith to believe they ever would

John's disillusionment from his glimpse of the other side of the silver screen brought him back to the theatre A resolution considering the censorship of plays had been passed that spring by the House of Commons without a

dissentient vote True, it had been no more than an academic discussion, but it might be held to show the direction of that breeze of opinion to which politicians were as sensitive as toy black-and-tan terriers to a draught. He made up his mind to stay in London during August and write a play attacking the party politicians who were sacrificing the country to their thirst for office. *Honourable Members* was to be the title. The Marconi scandal, the Piccadilly flat case partly hushed up because the names of Ministers and ex-Ministers of the House were alleged to be on the list of the amiable bawd's clients, the Ulster Army and Guy Fawkes mummary, the treatment of the suffragettes, the farce of the Naval Manœuvres when two thousand troops in transports had been successfully landed at Grimsby and Sunderland by an attacking squadron after the defending fleet had been lured away, which had brought the mimic war to a rapid end to avoid a public panic but most of all the Ulster Army Sir Edmund Arson Mr Jonah Straw no, better avoid verbal parody avoid indeed trying to bring any particular politician into contempt, but be content with a portrait that could serve for any politician.

Working in the white-panelled study of the small house in Millbank almost in the shadow of the great pile of Parliament, John had never found writing so dangerously enjoyable as he found it in that August of 1913—dangerously enjoyable because, with criticism in abeyance and fatigue imperceptible, mere fluency was apt to be mistaken for inspiration. However, in the third act he became doubtful of the atmosphere of the Irish scene, and wrote to ask Edward Fitzgerald and his wife to dine with him. He had not seen Fitz since his return from America, had not seen him indeed since he came back from Kerry eighteen months ago with an Irish bride. No sooner had he written the invitation than he was consumed with an intolerable impatience to know what Fitz

thought of that third act, and decided to drive out to West Kensington with the manuscript

It was late afternoon when he arrived at the house in Trelawney Road, and he was taken aback to find a furniture-van outside and the pavement and steps up to the front-door strewn with the canvas and straw of a removal. It was Fitz's mother looking frail in black who came to answer the bell.

"Why, John, who should ever have supposed to see you this afternoon?" she exclaimed.

"Well, I'm not long back from America and have been working hard on a play or I should have come along before this." He paused, eyeing her black.

"You didn't know the Doctor died last winter?"

"Fitz never let me know. I'm so sorry. He was such a splendid fellow."

"It was sudden. He wouldn't look after himself properly. There was a great deal of sickness, and he took pneumonia after influenza. God be good to him. But come right in, John, do now. There's not a place to sit in comfort, but Edward will be so glad to see you. Nora's already over at Tinoran. We're going back to Ireland, John."

"Are you glad?"

"Why anybody should be glad to be back in Ireland. But I'd be happier if—" she broke off. "But there, it's not for an Irishwoman to be feeling afraid of what may be coming."

They heard the voice of Fitz from the head of the stairs leading down to the basement.

"Be steady now with that box, boys, for it's full of dynamite, and won't stand being banged about too hard."

Two of the furniture men appeared with a heavy wooden box which they took out to the van, and behind them came Fitz himself.

"The Judge, begod!" he exclaimed. "Why John

boy, it's a lifetime since we met, but that sweet face pure and saintly in my memory lingers yet That's the last case to-day We'll have the house clear to-morrow in time to catch the night mail at Fishguard "

"I'm glad I took it into my head to call instead of writing I'd written a note to ask you and your wife to dine with me to-morrow night "

"Now I wonder what I can make in the way of a meal?" Mrs Fitzgerald began

"You and Fitz had better come out to dine with me "

"No, I won't come, John, I've plenty of packing to keep me busy, but you go, Edward "

And so it was arranged, though John was worried at leaving Mrs Fitzgerald alone in the almost empty house However, she was firm in refusing to come out to dinner and declared that nothing suited her better than to be left alone to-night

During the drive back to Westminster John heard Fitz's news When shortly after his father's death the lease of the tenant of Tinoran had run out, Fitz had decided to sell the practice and return to live in the home of his fathers He might practise there There was room for another doctor The existing practitioner was old, and a fierce Unionist to boot For a year, at least, moreover, he should be occupied with other matters

"With politics?"

"With practical politics, Judge "

Nora had been delighted when he decided to give up London

"London is no place when you've lived all your life in Tralee Tralee may be as dirty a town as you'll see in Ireland, but it's clean dirt—just good honest mud It was the dirty dirt of London Nora couldn't stand So long as the old man was alive it would have been difficult for me to make the change He'd watched West Kensington growing out of the fields in the late 'seventies and early

'eighties, and even at the very end it was still more of a small country town to his fancy than the shoddy little suburb it will gradually become, the way things are moving now. He had his old patients, those who were left of them. It was I who had the new ones. And they weren't the same thing at all at all. My mother is feeling a bit nervous of the change. She hasn't been back in Kerry for over twenty-five years."

"And where's Ellen?" John asked.

"Ellen is still acting on tour. There was some talk of her marrying, but he was a Protestant, and it wasn't so much the trouble of what religion the children were to be as the trouble whether there were to be any children at all. But Ellen's all right. She likes touring around. Last time I saw her she told me to remind you of an obscure actress called Ellen Fitzgerald when you had a part to spare."

"Why, I might put her in a play I want to talk to you about to-night, Fitz."

"Augh, don't be bothering yourself over Ellen. It was just said for fun."

But John felt a little guilty. He should have remembered Ellen himself. There would have been a part for her in one of the *Annette* companies on tour.

"Are the Fenwicks still in Gladwyn Road?" he asked, for he was thinking he might have remembered Connie too.

"They've been gone these five years at least. Somewhere down on the South Coast, I believe. I haven't seen them since the dark-eyed Constance used to come and flash her eyes at you when we were still at school. Begod, John, you and I are moving along through the years. I was thirty-one last June."

"And I'll be thirty-one in October. You haven't a child yet?"

"It's not for the want of trying," Fitz declared with a loud laugh. "But I expect my future offspring has resolved to be born in the land of his fathers."

After dinner John revealed the ulterior motive behind his invitation

"Hell, Judge, what do I know about plays? Is it an obstetrical scene you want to consult me about? That's the kind of reeking slice of life you fierce realists like to serve up to the public nowadays, isn't it? Ah, damn it, John, give me a good fiddler every time instead of that kind of stuff. That's telling you the truth."

John hastily explained that *Honourable Members* was a satire on contemporary politics

"Put them on the stage as they are," his friend advised "They'll satirize themselves"

"No, I won't let you off, Fitz. I want to know whether I have put the Irish point of view authentically. I'm sorry, but you're off to-morrow and you've just got to go through it to-night."

"Do you remember that poker binge at Joe O'Malley's on the night of the old Queen's funeral? I can see you now, Judge, sitting on the kerb in Claverton Street and swearing you were as steady as the Abbot of Aberbrothock. I'm damned if you haven't got the same glint in your eyes now. Read on, and leave the Johnnie Jameson within reach. I've no patients to fear for my breath to-night, glory be to God!"

Fitz was a good audience until that third act of which the author had had his doubts. Throughout the reading of that John saw an expression of deepening disapproval on his face.

"This Irish part is all wrong, eh?" he said when he had turned over the last page. "I knew it. Now tell me just what is wrong with it."

"In the first place, why be so hard on Carson, or the man who stands quite obviously for Carson?" Fitzgerald asked.

"Can one be too hard on him?"

"Ah, hell, the man's sincere. It's a damned insult to

Ireland to class him with that pudding-faced Scotchman Bonar Law "

"They're both out for a party victory "

"Not at all Carson doesn't give a damn for a party victory Carson is Trinity College, and unless you know Trinity College you can't understand him Carson's all right He wants a fight, and begod, he shall have a fight You as a Liberal may be feeling a bit sore with him, because he looks like giving the Unionists an easy ride back to power on his back, but the day he fetched out King Billy's orange flag and got the four counties jumping mad he did the finest day's work for Ireland ever done "

"I don't follow you, Fitz And I'm *not* a blasted Liberal "

"Carson started getting in rifles to defend Ulster We've started getting in rifles to take Ulster Why, with my furniture I'm taking over a hundred, and ten boxes of ammunition When I told those fellows to be careful not to bang that case about, they didn't know how serious I was "

"But do you mean to tell me you don't resent the way Home Rule for Ireland has been used by the Unionists for party politics?"

"Home Rule for Ireland, my foot! Party politics, my ——! Do you suppose that damned Bill is any use to us? Do you suppose we shall sit down and pat ourselves on the chest because the British Parliament had given us the right to manage our own drains and public-houses? Not at all What we were afraid of was that this eunuch of a Bill would pass, because that would have postponed freedom for another long stretch of weary years But Carson has so stirred up matters that even if the Bill is passed it will never be put into force, and when we've fought it out in Ireland the British Government will be glad to agree to anything for peace Besides, there'll be a European War before another two years are out, and

whatever the state of our civil war they'll have to give us what we want And don't forget with every month that passes we shall be wanting more No, you let Carson alone, John He's done more for Ireland with that Covenant of his than Parnell, Wolf Tone, Emmett, and Edward Fitzgerald put together 80,000 rifles in Ulster? There'll be twice as many rifles in the South very soon "

"So you're going back to Ireland with the prospect of seeing your wildest dreams come true You're pretty lucky, you know You have a perfectly straight path before you Your religion and your country Ireland lost her language and kept her religion Wales kept her language and lost her religion Brittany kept her language and her religion Scotland lost both All four have lost their liberty, but Ireland thanks to the sea has kept her idea of liberty And now she may regain it "

"She will regain it," Fitz avowed

"Yes, you're a lucky man No doubts, no hesitations, and now the last link with England severed You must feel superbly happy "

"I'll drive the boat from Fishguard to Rosslare just with the mere power of my feelings, John But mind you, Ireland is not free yet The fight has not begun England doesn't let hold so easily as that I've still a notion I'll die for Ireland "

Fitzgerald made the declaration with the enthusiasm of a man going nap on a hand that was a certainty

"But you'll die with perfect faith that all you have hoped for will be granted," said John "You'll die, moreover, with perfect faith that your soul will behold the victory to win which Irishmen have been dying for centuries "

"Sure I will And, John, when you hear I'm dead, don't forget I'll have prayed a hell of a lot for you while I was alive "

"Have you, Fitz? I wonder why "

"I think because you were the only boy that took me seriously when we were at school 'Damn it,' I used to say to myself, 'if a fellow like the Judge believes I'm not a bloody lunatic I'm not a bloody lunatic because there were never two lunatics in this world who thought alike' I thought if I'd gone through St James's without finding a single person to understand what I was after I might have lost my faith and decided I *was* a poor lunatic That's why I used to jeer at you so much I was always afraid you were humouring me, and when I found you weren't I went on jeering because I was afraid you'd find out what I was suspecting about myself You may feel cursedly uncertain about yourself and unsure which way you're going, but you gave me certainty and security, and so alive or dead I will always remember you This is a grand bottle of Johnnie Jameson If I could have chosen the perfect way to celebrate my last night in London it would have been to sit here with you and a bottle of whisky between us "

When Fitzgerald was gone John thought enviously of that certain faith of his which feared neither death nor life

"Mere assent is no good I could assent now to Christianity by a process of exhausting all the alternative creeds as insufficient I recognize that Christianity alone provides man with an incontrovertible rule of conduct inspired by an intelligible revelation of God, but without the assurance in my own mind that such a revelation was made once and for ever at Bethlehem recognition means nothing Nobody ever argued himself or was argued by anybody else into faith If I could believe that Christ was God with what passion I could believe that the Catholic Church was the sole repository of His truth! Christians between them have turned Almighty God into an extremely eccentric old gentleman, but no body of Christians has managed to produce a sufficiently credible

eccentric old gentleman to oust the logical God Who speaks through His Church ”

The next day John read through his play and decided that it was without life

“I’ll not be tempted into supposing it possesses importance because the Lord Chamberlain refuses to licence it ” So he destroyed the manuscript, and turned to an agreeable little comedy which he found himself able to write without difficulty As it happened to be exactly what a manager wanted he was able to arrange for its production almost at once

It was now the second week in September, and John bethought himself of a promise made to his young brother to celebrate his twelfth birthday by taking him on some expedition before he went back to school He rushed up to Worcestershire where the family was staying with Grandmother, and not entirely to Lady Hunter’s approval carried off David in a car he had hired for the week left of the holidays David, fleckled and sunburnt to a rose-flushed brown with hair of dusty gold, was much more excited by the car itself than by the country through which they drove John, who on the first day of the tour had been gratified by his brother’s choice of a remote inn for a night’s lodging instead of wanting to be driven on to the next town where he might expect the entertainment of the cinema, discovered that the choice had not been dictated by any love of rural seclusion or beauty of setting, but by the opportunity this inn seemed to offer of his first lesson at driving a car, the chauffeur having been already won over to the plot

“I think I know what I’m going to be, John,” he announced when just before dusk they sat down to a candle-lit meal “I think I’ll be a racing motorist at Brooklands Simpson says if he’d taken up motoring when he was as old as me instead of starting with horses he’d have been a racing motorist ”

"You'd better tell your grandmother that She'll dance with delight I can't think of any career that would please her more "

"Shut up being so jolly sarcastic Why shouldn't I be a racing motorist "

"But why not be a racing aviator? Motoring will be very old-fashioned in another ten years "

"Well, I'll be both I say, the chaps at my school will be most frightfully jealous when I tell them I can drive a car "

"You think you can drive a car already?"

"No, but I will before I go back that is if you give me a chance to practise at every place we stop like you did this afternoon Perhaps I'll be able to drive you a bit Simpson said there was no reason why I shouldn't take the wheel so long as he was beside me "

"You jolly well won't take the wheel while I'm in the car What Simpson does when I'm out of it is his funeral "

"Why do grown-up people always think that people who aren't grown up can't ever do anything except swot at schoolwork?"

"Would you trust yourself in a car driven by Prudence?"

"I should darned well think I wouldn't Good lummy, she's only ten Besides, she's a girl "

A little more freckled, a little more sunburnt, David went back to his prep school, able to boast proudly that for two hundred yards of the Great West Road he had driven a 30-h p Daimler car with his brother as witness For this he took the precaution of obtaining a written certificate from John, countersigned by Simpson the chauffeur Of the five or six hundred miles of English countryside through which he had passed he retained no impression except a vague belief that they had driven through Bristol, which was not the case Oh yes, the

Cheddar Gorge had been rather decent. He did remember that because that's where Simpson thought he had a choke.

Just after David went back to school a great sham-fight took place near Daventry. Field-Marshal Sir John French commanding the defending force won a famous victory over the invaders, but as the invaders were also under his command the military critics were not completely reassured about their country's impregnable position. Not that the people of England were worrying much about that. Any interest there was in military preparations was directed over the sea to Ireland, where a fund was being raised to indemnify the members of the Ulster Volunteer Force, now 60,000 strong, against wounds or death in the service of the Provisional Government. In Dublin the strike of the transport workers became more violent. The Nationalist Members were being denounced by Mr Larkin as servants of capitalism. People were beginning to look round nervously for signs of labour unrest in England. A farm lad at Nantes who had been reprov'd by his employer for laziness murdered him, his mother, three children, and the servant girl. Meanwhile the Church Congress met at Southampton to discuss for its programme "The Kingdom of God in the world to-day" with reference to sex, race, and social order. The general feeling was that votes for women had nothing to do with Christianity. The following week during the Litany in St Paul's Cathedral suffragettes rose and chanted a petition for the hunger-strikers being tortured in prison. The week after that there was a colliery disaster in South Wales when 426 miners lost their lives, a serious railway accident in Liverpool, and a German Zeppelin blew up with the loss of all its crew. John paid less attention than he might have done to such evidence of the progress of the Kingdom of God in the world to-day, because he was entirely preoccupied with

the rehearsals of his new play, for the success of which all the signs looked most favourable. At the end of the month a Royal Commission on Venereal Disease was appointed which included three women, but there was no sign of giving even such women the privilege of voting for any particular party. Larkin, the Dublin agitator, was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment for shouting 'God save the King' in derision. Sir Rufus Isaacs became Lord Chief Justice, Sir John Simon Attorney-General, but Mr Buckmaster was preferred to Sir Alexander Ogilvie for the vacant Solicitor-Generalship. The Orient Express started running again now that peace had been signed between Turkey and Bulgaria. And by the second train of the resumed service Vice-Consul Emil Stern came home on leave from Asia Minor via Constantinople.

It was over five years since John had seen Emil. The full dark moustache he had grown in deference to the Levantine prejudice against clean-shaven men made him look older, but without that he would have seemed hardly changed from the time he went down from Oxford. Still that finely carved pale face more Greek than Semitic, still those heavy-lidded large lustrous eyes, still that skin seeming nearly translucent like fragile porcelain, and still those hands white and light and trim as feathers.

"I must go to your first night, John," he said.

"I don't think you'll care much for this play," the author replied in a tone of deprecation. "It's very light stuff."

However, the play did have a great success, and Emil gratified John considerably by assuring him that within its limitations it was a capital piece of work.

"I wish you'd seen *Annette*."

"I read about it. It sounded to me *Traviata* cum *Trilby* stuff, which as you know I cannot stand."

"Are you going to stay on for ever in the Consular

Service?" John asked, with not less critical disapproval in the tone of his voice

"Why, I think I'll have to for the present. As far as I can see, a general European war is certain within four years at the latest, and if there is to be a war I would rather be a vice-consul than a soldier."

"But how would you be a soldier?"

"I suppose we shall all be conscripted."

"Conscription?" exclaimed John. "Conscription in this country? Why, the notion is absurd! Fantastic!"

"I don't see how this country will carry on a big war without conscription. But it's not the war that interests me so much as what will happen after the war. Meanwhile, until this tiresome Balkan upset came along I was enjoying myself thoroughly. Mileto has hardly been excavated at all, and I have gathered together quite a band of amateur enthusiasts. But the foolish Turks suspected gun-emplacements and trenches, so we had to abandon operations for a time. However, next spring, if the F O leave me where I am, I shall start again."

"I can't somehow see you as a vice-consul," John told him.

"I'm rather an efficient one as a matter of fact."

"Yes, but don't you find yourself exasperated by officialdom?"

"I'm not convinced that officials are more stupid than other people. They merely enjoy more opportunity to have their stupidity set on record. Asia Minor is an enthralling country, and how otherwise could I manage to live there except as a commission-agent or a licorice-grower, neither of which professions appeal to me? You'd better come back with me next month."

Leaving behind them the lugubrious echoes of Mr Bonar Law's speech at Bristol announcing that the

country was rapidly and inevitably drifting to civil war and the merry echoes of Mr Lloyd George's interview with the *Daily Chronicle* in which the Chancellor had declared that Anglo-German relations were far more friendly than for years past and that a revolt against militarism was spreading throughout Christendom, Emil and John left England in sparkling weather at the beginning of February John's play looked like running right through the season He felt happy

The film of Joan of Arc was not yet on view in Paris, but Gabrielle Derozier was acting in a play by Camille Varenne, to which John persuaded Emil to accompany him If Varenne had let her down before he had made amends now She was enjoying the greatest triumph of her career

"It's astonishing what virtuosos these Frenchmen are on the triangle," John observed "Of course they're not damped down by the thought of the Lord Chamberlain's licence in front of them and they have no bad actors or actresses to contend with There may be bad actors and actresses in France, but they do not appear on the stage "

"Yes, it's a skilful convention," Emil admitted grudgingly, "but no more skilful than in its own way the pretty-pretty genteel English convention Neither touches reality What I dislike about the French is their belief that their drama and their novels are more profound merely because they are granted a freedom of expression which is denied to the English writer If French life as a whole is what their drama represents it to be the sooner they are wiped off the map of Europe the better But of course in point of fact it is nothing of the kind Sex, from the point of view of the French dramatist, is always something to laugh about "

"So it was for the old Greek comedy," John reminded Emil

"Well, I think the worth of Aristophanes has been

grossly overestimated I believe if we had as much of the work of his contemporaries like Cratinus as we have of his we should get him into clearer focus "

John shook his head in despair

"You know, to hear anybody talk like that about Aristophanes is to me blasphemy Then I suppose you'd put that dreary fellow Brieux at the head of French dramatists?"

"I think I should It's not great drama, but at least it is written seriously "

"I should think it was," John agreed "The fellow ought to turn Quain's Medical Dictionary into a play "

"Then do you think syphilis is a joke?"

"No, but neither do I think it is a dramatic theme You had better taste when you were fifteen and disposed of *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* "

"*Ghosts* is medically inaccurate," Emil reminded him

"But nobody has come as near to Ibsen in extracting drama from venereal disease Brieux! I saw a performance of *Damaged Goods* at some Sunday drama club And the audience reminded me of an old maid looking up a dirty word in a dictionary "

"I'm not defending the audience I'm defending the play "

"Perhaps you'll defend Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*?"

"It served a purpose when it was written It seems tame to us now "

"It's not the tameness I object to It's the silly caricature it offers of actuality You'd think after reading it that as many respectable families were living on the profits of brothel-keeping as on the income from Consols—living on guilt-edged securities in fact "

"But are you really under the delusion, John, that the drama ever does touch what you call actuality? So long as the drama kept asides and soliloquies it could maintain a certain standard of psychological accuracy, but from the

moment it became self-conscious about such a transparent device and went a-whoring after what you call actuality it sacrificed inherent probability to external probability, truth to verisimilitude. Modern life has banished most of the action with which dramatists kept the groundlings amused. Hence the falsification of life to which a modern dramatist has to lend himself in order to achieve a play which will hold the attention of an audience. He is driven to create artificial situations, whereas if he had stuck to the outmoded aside he could have trained a modern audience to appreciate far subtler asides than were ever contemplated by the comparatively unsophisticated earlier dramatists. In the eighteenth century the drama achieved the height of artificiality by preserving the artificial convention of the aside and soliloquy and adding to it the artificial convention of the situation. It is just as improbable that Lady Teazle and her husband will both hide in different parts of Joseph Surface's room for the purpose of producing the famous screen scene as that Joseph Surface should come down stage and tell the audience at the top of his voice in Lady Sneerwell's drawing-room that he is a rascal and fears he will be found out in the end."

"I have put my hand to so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last," John quoted. "Then your contention is we should start writing plays in which that kind of thing is said under a convention that nobody on the stage hears it?"

"Why not? You've kept your screen scenes. Why boggle at a man's thinking aloud?"

"It might be an amusing experiment," John admitted. "But if one got such a play produced it would not run a week."

"Exactly. But it would be an attempt at creative art. As things are, you and every other successful dramatist in England or anywhere else are using a medium of ex-

pression from which the vitality has long since been sucked You are cutting a dried orange-peel into ingenious patterns, and the entertainment you offer differs in degree but not in kind from the postures of a contortionist or the scratching of a Biblical text on a pin's head You think that the slickness of a French dramatist's entertainment is something smarter than you can ever manage in England Personally I consider your play now running in London better entertainment than the play we saw to-night But that doesn't mean I can take it seriously as a work of art "

"Yes, but wait a minute, Emil You lead a more complicated internal life than I do I have no complexities On your mother's advice I studied the work of this Viennese fellow Freud "

"It was I who advised her to read him," interjected Emil

"I'll bet it was!" John retorted "Now I'd been right through Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* while I was at Oxford, and right through Havelock Ellis, and I had always felt that both of them might have ventured on a little theorizing Freud has at least suggested cause for effect, and I think he is often right, but he completely misunderstands the normal human being And the net result of his theorizing so far as I have digested it is that faded old cliché which women at tea parties enunciate as a tremendous new truth 'I suppose we're all a little mad ' Well, I deny that If language has any meaning we are either mad or sane A lunatic isn't sane because he has some rational moments, and a sane man isn't mad because he sometimes behaves idiotically Half the madness in the world is the result of deliberate self-encouragement, and if ever the theories of this fellow Freud obtain an extended currency among the quasi-educated mass the statistics of mental deficiency will leap up But to come to you At one time we were very

intimate I know that you suffered then from these sexual repressions that it is one of the jobs of this so-called psycho-analysis to unravel How far you have been successful I do not know because for the last ten years we have not discussed your emotional side I imagine however that you have led a completely ascetic life "

"You happen to be right," Emil admitted disdainfully

"Then that leaves you with a good deal of practical ignorance of one side of life Consequently you suspect the actuality—I really must use the word—the actuality of a triangle drama such as we have just seen to-night You have nothing by which to judge it except literary experience To you it seems psychologically a mere repetition of a threadbare situation tricked out with cunningly contrived pseudo-dramatic effects "

"So it is "

"Well, I with a wider experience of women than you found the chief female character superbly well observed and presented, and the two men sufficiently plausible to make me accept them I did not require those asides and soliloquies, because the spoken word and the performed action were enough to reveal these recognizable human beings tangled up as they were Now, it might be possible for me to make intelligible to an audience your homosexual temperament by what you said and left unsaid, but I should have a hell of a task to convince an audience or the character I was able to present to them that such a character would enter the Consular Service of his Britannic Majesty I don't think I could make such a character plausible to an ordinary audience, but if I could show an intelligent audience a scene in which that character was once upon a time very wrathful because he was not allowed to be Captain of St James's in spite of the fact that he was the best scholar of that school, I could make such an audience understand why Emil Stern became Vice-Consul Stern I could go farther and show

that the impulse to become an official was an assertion of the authority of which for centuries Emil Stern's race had been deliberately deprived. But unless I were capable of creating a Hamlet and allowing him as many soliloquies as the original was allowed I could not possibly succeed in portraying the inward drama in Emil Stern's mind which led to his taking that astonishing step. On the other hand it is questionable whether that inward drama could be made absorbing for an audience. Even Hamlet can't get away with his soliloquies unless the actor turns them into 'cello solos."

"Always thinking in terms of audiences," Emil jeered.

"That's what plays are written for," Goethe said.

"But, John, we've outlived Goethe's opinions. He really does not impress me as an authority on anything except courtly deportment. If you think I am going to accept as the test of a great play the opinion of a contemporary audience you must think me as gullible as yourself."

"If you can swallow Freud whole I think you're much more gullible," John retorted.

"Surely it's clear to you that if you *are* as simple as you suppose yourself, of which I'm not convinced, you are a survival. You are in the cant phase 'behind the times'. Why don't you express yourself in romantic costume drama? You could deal beautifully with such naiveties and be the successful entertainer, which is all you apparently want to be. But you are *not* so simple, John. If you were you would long ago have withdrawn into the recesses of Christian credulity. There you have the perfect creed for a simple mental organism. But you can't believe in Christianity, because you cannot even feel positive that the Christ myth which was woven out of a Jewish agitator called Jesus was woven about an actually human being. You are as much a unit of the present world as I am, and

to reject the complicity we are discovering the human mind to be just because you happen to be eupeptic, to find it easy to win from women the carnal gifts at their disposal, and equally easy to win from the public that popularity which is only another aspect of carnality, is to label yourself lazy not simple I don't think you have any real creative genius, but if you cannot be a prophet you *could* be an artist, and in that belief I shall continue to jeer at your facile contentment to remain an *amuseur* "

"I'll let you score one over my lack of faith in the supernatural, but I won't accept this complicity of the modern mind compared with the mind of the past It may be more crowded, but the essence of it remains the same "

"Essence of mind?"

"Well, well, you know what I mean by that loose phrase," said John impatiently "And by being more crowded it may be more easily diseased The complicity of which you speak may be the pattern on a slice of ripe gorgonzola compared with the soapy cleanliness of cheddar Both are reduced to an indistinguishable substance by the digestive juices Wait until the modern mind has been tried by experience comparable to the experience of the past—not by Freud but by famine, or pestilence, or war Remember the Athenian mind That was crumpled up by an outbreak of typhus due to bad sanitation and the temporary overcrowding caused by a Spartan invasion "

"There's no parallel None whatever," Emil declared emphatically "We've attained a condition of development when at last we can begin to see the potentiality of the human mind People like you are traitors to humanity You are like drug-purveyors, you and the popular editors and the popular novelists and all the rest of them You are paid to induce mental sleep, but presently you'll find that your drugs won't induce sleep "

"If everybody else stays awake I'll probably stay awake too," said John "But not to-night, because I'm feeling

physically sleepy and can't argue with you any more. It is so agreeable to be arguing with you again, though."

At the end of the performance Gabrielle Derozier found beside the sticks of greasepaint on her dressing-table a large bouquet of freesias and creamy orchids to which was tied a card of John Ogilvie's in the corner of which inscribed in his own hand was the one word *hommage*. Leaning against her big powder-box was a note in pencil. She picked it up, conscious that the quick eyes of Victorine were regarding her. It was to say that John had intended to do no more than remind her of his existence by the flowers, but that after her incomparable performance to-night in such an extremely good play he could not leave Paris by the Orient Express to-morrow night without calling upon her, would she let him, to tell her in person his admiration of her acting, better he ventured to think than ever. Gabrielle pursed those generous lips and eyed herself pensively in the mirror, tapping the envelope upon the table as if it were keeping time to some tune that was being played in her mind. At last she turned to her maid and bade her telephone to Monsieur at — she looked first at the card on which he had *not* written the name of his hotel. The notification of his address in Paris *had* been spontaneous then. She smiled. If he had put his hotel on the card she should have snubbed him by paying no attention. That he had not done so, however, proved, whether on account of herself or on account of her acting, he did genuinely desire to see her again. Victorine must telephone to Monsieur at his hotel in the morning, and say that she should expect him to *déjeuner* at half-past twelve.

"*Bien, madame*."

Madame had of course remembered that Monsieur Varenne was expected to *déjeuner* to-morrow?

Gabrielle hesitated Varenne was so vain and touchy She shrugged impatient shoulders Victorine must telephone Monsieur Varenne also and postpone *déjeuner* until the day after to-morrow If he wished to see her to-morrow he must come to her *five-o'clock*

It was pity, she was thinking, that John had not been impulsive enough to come round behind himself, instead of sending the note She should have enjoyed going out to supper with him Victorine helped her off with her dress, and she seated herself in a peignoir before the mirror to take off her make-up She picked up the bouquet How much the perfume of these flowers recalled orange-blossom! Had John realized that when he had chosen them?

"Ah, I will not be sentimental," she told herself, as she dipped a long slender forefinger and middle finger in the pot of bear's-grease It would have been foolish to add a postscript to their chapter of love The Orient Express? One does not book a seat in the Orient Express to forgo it for a sentimental caprice There was not the slightest intention on the part of her former lover to return to the beginning of the chapter It was clear from his note that it was to-morrow he wished to meet her again, not to-night That note was no more than a tribute to her performance—the sincere expression in person of the scribbled conventional homage he had paid her in advance Which would she have preferred? To conquer with her womanhood or with her art? There was no doubt what the answer to that question was, though it was a little humiliating to have to admit it Still even the triumph of her acting over him could be counted partially to her womanhood She looked at her face glistening with the bear's-grease and by a supreme effort of self-control, while she rubbed away grease and paint with the towel, she expunged simultaneously from her mind that first slight re-

sentment she had felt against John for not coming round to ask if he could see her to-night

Gabrielle's apartment overlooked the Parc Monceau, and the drawing-room papered in large panels with a design of great pink roses on a grey ground reminiscent of an Aubusson carpet was bright and quiet in the sunshine streaming across the park on that glittering February morning. The perfume of the freesias scented the air. A white Persian cat with a blue and a green eye was stretched out along one of the windows, luxuriating in the beneficent warmth. A round clock held up by a pair of Dresden shepherdesses was ticking very fast. It was here that Gabrielle waited to receive John, thinking of breakfast in that Sorrento villa. Five weeks of his company in over a year and a half. How absurd for her heart to be beating! The door opened. He was exactly two minutes early. She felt absurdly pleased by those two minutes. They were as grateful as another bouquet. And he had brought her more flowers.

"John, but you sent me so many last night."

"These are musk-roses, and I could not find the ones I wanted yesterday."

She took them from him, and as she did so kissed him on the cheek.

"How sweet of you to ask me to *dejeuner*," he exclaimed. "I very nearly asked you to have supper with me last night, but the man I'm travelling with would have laughed at me if you had refused, and."

"And in any case, *mon ami*, you thought it was so much more prudent to run no risks. You did not mean to see me at all. Please confess now."

"I didn't, Gabrielle, but you were so marvellous that I had to scribble that note and send it round to the stage-door."

"And so you have had another success in London? I think you are excessively lucky, John, though I was per-

haps a little jealous that you could have such a success without Gabrielle "

"Were you? You needn't ever be jealous of future successes. None will ever be like that first success I owed to you "

"Perhaps you mean that," she seemed to herself to gasp, for there was some violin quality in his voice to which the faintest emotion gave an almost intolerable poignancy and to hear it again dried her throat. Abruptly she laughed. His dark blue eyes gazing at her lighted with a question.

"I'm laughing because I must be frank and tell you whatever your conceit that I find it a little ridiculous to be letting poor Varenne suppose he can turn marble into flesh "

"You are with Varenne he is your lover now?"

"When I am feeling so kind, yes. And haven't you found, if not a *grande amoureuse*, at least some *petite amie*, John?"

"No. Not even that. But don't let's talk about it, because I still think of the god of love as a mischievous boy who has only to hear a man boast he is heartwhole to make a fool of him. And in my present mood I really do not want to fall in love, no matter how lightly. Surely you can understand that, Gabrielle? I'm off to stay with a friend of mine in Asia Minor. Whether there I shall find some irresistible houri remains to be seen "

"Oh, I am so sure you will," she interposed.

"That's on the knees of Eros. Anyway, I'm so anxious not to find a houri that I'd rather not give the slightest suggestion of boasting to my sincerity. So let's talk about films and plays and anything else except the emotions "

"Only one more annoying question, John. Why are you so anxious not to be in love?"

"For one thing, because I feel so uneasy about the way things are going in Europe. I dread the responsibility of

a serious love-affair, and I don't want to fritter away emotion on mere amusement. A woman like you who knows she has only to look upon a man to make him desire her is entitled by the privilege of her sex to make all men desire her and respond to none. If you feel as you put it kind, you are conscious of conferring a favour, and the man on whom it is conferred accepts it as such. A man who is likely to attract any woman on whom he looks with a thought of desire has not the same privileges. He too may feel 'kind' sometimes, and he may make love to a woman only out of 'kindness', but the woman will never recognize such a kindness. To tell a woman she is receiving instead of giving favours would be the ultimate insult you could offer her."

"Indeed, yes," Gabrielle agreed vehemently.

"The very thought of such an outrage to feminine pride rouses your indignation. Yet if a friend of Varenne's were to tell him that you only let him make love to you because you were grateful to him for other things and wanted to reward him, Varenne's pride would not be outraged."

"Varenne can think himself excessively fortunate," she avowed contemptuously.

"Quite so, because most men are less concerned with the willingness of a woman's surrender than with the fact of the surrender. Otherwise marriage would be a bigger failure in many more cases than it is now. I never yet heard a man complain of a woman's coldness, who did not attribute that coldness to some deficiency in her physical constitution rather than to his own failure to rouse her."

"And so you have decided to give up being so kind to poor women?" And then noticing he did not like her teasing of him she added quickly "But you are right, John. I can perfectly comprehend how you feel. And I comprehend too that you could not have said to many people what you have said to me."

"There's hardly anybody else to whom I could say it," he declared emphatically

"And when did you begin to be kind to me?" she asked sparkling

"Yes, I was waiting for that. But I can see from your eyes you are not serious. It was because I hated the idea of letting our love-affair continue with nothing except the ardour of our love-making to assure us of its endurance that I had the courage to answer your challenge honestly. And you too were dissatisfied with that testimony of passion. Otherwise you wouldn't have discovered so much piety in yourself."

"Perhaps we have both been very reasonable," she said, "or perhaps both so stupid," she added with a half sigh.

"No, not at all stupid, but very reasonable," he insisted.

"Then we must now be so reasonable as to eat our *déjeuner*. *Écoute, mon ami, nous allons manger*" and she underwent that fascinating transformation, of which Frenchwomen alone possess the secret, from Cleopatra into the wife of Jacques Bonhomme, enumerating what they would eat and what they would drink, and the cleverness with which she had secured this or that delicacy at a bargain price.

"I think," said John when he was sipping his coffee and smoking a caporal, "in fact I know that if I had my way I would not allow any man to rise to a position of influence in a European state until he could convince me that he had been granted the precious experience of being loved by a Frenchwoman."

"You would find a great emptiness of *hommes d'état*, *mon cher*, because I can tell to you that very few Frenchwomen can love anybody at all except a Frenchman."

"And of course I have to remember that my father's mother was a Frenchwoman."

"Yes, you have told me. But I always think of you as so very English. That is because of my English mother,

who herself is half French Yet if I would think a little, I would say to myself that you have nothing typical of the English in you "

"But I haven't a drop of real Saxon blood in my veins "

He struck the palm of one hand with the fist of the other

"What is the matter?"

"Why, of course! Yes, yes! You would make a perfect Mary Queen of Scots That's what I'll think about in Asia Minor A play about Mary Queen of Scots "

And during their drive in the Bois after lunch they talked so much of Mary's loves that the present was forgotten between the past and the future

"And now," said Gabrielle when they were back in her apartment "To-day is my *five-o'clock* It is just a drinking of tea, or perhaps *vin Porto* with ratafia biscuits, but Varenne will be here and quite a number of other people to chatter about the world of Paris If you like to stay but you will be *ennuye* perhaps, because I shall be always moving here and there, and when my guests have departed I must go at once to the theatre "

"You'd rather I didn't stay?"

"No, no, it is to please yourself "

But she did not want him to stay because she did not want to see him talking with Varenne, and moreover she did not want Varenne's wit exercised at his expense afterwards for her benefit

"I'll go now," he told her

He took her in his arms

"It's wonderful to think I shall be seeing you in another play of mine, dearest dearest Gabrielle I shall write to you from Mileto of its progress I shall have to send for books first There must be some pretence of history about it, but I shall lay the first act in France "

"When Mary was just a girl Remember I am thirty "

And by now Gabrielle really did believe this was her age

"Girls were women in the sixteenth century," John reminded her "And you'll have to be over forty in the last act, don't forget "

"I think I am an artist, John "

"A great great artist "

She kissed him on the lips Then she pushed him from her

"Go now, please, John, because I must change my dress for my *five-o'clock* "

The afternoon sun was sinking into the city haze, its gold turning to copper The white Persian cat had decided an hour ago that the fire was warmer than such a ghost of a sun Gabrielle went along to her *salon*, a large room panelled with dark oak in the Francis I style All was ready for her weekly gathering of *five-o'clock* guests When she reached her bedroom she found the musk-roses brought by John arranged on the table by her bed

"*Cette Victorine*," she murmured to herself, as she rang the bell

When Victorine arrived there was a discussion what dress she should wear, and then she asked her maid if she was sorry to hear that Monsieur Ogilvie was leaving Paris to-night Victorine was extremely sorry to hear it Monsieur Ogilvie was *tellement aimable* But Victorine would be glad to hear that Monsieur Ogilvie hoped to have a new play for her sometime this year? Victorine was sure such a play would give Madame infinite pleasure

"Yet it was wiser for us to part," Gabrielle declared, with a challenge in her voice

"Madame knows best "

"You are stubborn, (*rosse* was the word she used in French), you will not tell me what I wish to hear "

"I live with Madame," Victorine reminded her mistress, with a demure smile

"I shall never love anybody as much as I have loved him "

"I am sure of it "

"Nevertheless I am more happy that we have parted as we have "

"That I understand "

"I shall not go to Fontainebleau on Sunday with Monsieur Varenne "

"We cannot expect such fine weather to last in the month of February Madame will be well advised to remain at home And indeed without the sun it is cold enough "

But presently when Gabrielle found herself in that thronged salon of hers, assiduous ever of her guests' comfort and conscious ever of the profound regard in which they held her, she knew that for her ultimate peace of mind she had been right last April to precipitate a crisis at Soriento

The noise of conversation grew louder, and although there were several women present throaty male Parisian voices agreeably predominated A distinguished man wearing the rosette of the Legion in his frock-coat paid her compliments as he sipped his glass of Porto It was one of the Ministers in power After all, she *was* Gabrielle Derozier and she *was* very near to ruling the Paris stage Presently a fine-featured man with dark mocking eyes came up to her

"Did he enjoy my lunch?" he asked "I hope so "

"Now, don't be tiresome, Varenne It was John Ogilvie He leaves to-night for Constantinople "

"Then I will eat my own lunch to-morrow Good!"

"Only if you promise to behave yourself "

The chattering continued The lights were switched on

"Yes," thought Gabrielle, flashing glances round the rosy amber glow of the crowded room lest any guest was without what he wanted "Yes, I am better without an excess of emotion off the stage "

BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
MILETO

February 16, 1914

My dearest Else,

I am so glad I decided to come here! The voyage from Constantinople was a dream. Fortunately the weather behaved itself, or otherwise on this small Greek steamer with the cabins all opening out of an extremely stuffy saloon I should certainly have been very seasick, for these classic seas are a considerable strain on the emotion anyway. We sailed out of the Dardanelles in a rosy dawn. The sun—with that lovely buttery look the morning sun sometimes has—bumped along the tops of the mountains of Asia, and there was Troy. Nothing to see except a green stretch of level marshy land, but I felt quite wobbly at the knees with excitement. To starboard Imbros was visible with Samothrace beyond, a great rugged triangle of smoky blue. It was on the top of Samothrace that Zeus sat looking across Imbros to watch one of the battles. We kept close in to the mainland all the way down. Steep hills mostly covered with olives coming down to dark peacock-blue water which deepened into shades of bottle-green when we passed along the channel between the mainland and one of the larger islands. We spent a night at Chios, but it was dusk before we arrived, and we sailed again very early in the morning. We reached Mileto in the afternoon. The entrance to the harbour is narrow and from the excitement of the Turkish gunners in the forts on the headland you might have thought that Greece and Turkey were still at war and that our grubby little ship was a dangerous invader. Once through the narrow entrance, the harbour widens out in a big semicircle with houses and a road all round it. Most of the ships are moored stern on to the quay. A new arrival drops anchor in the middle of the harbour for the Customs examination.

The town rises above the harbour until the houses are lost in gardens—billows of almond-blossom just now these gardens. The Consulate is down on the quay, but Emil has a delicious house high up on the outskirts of the town—with an Omar Khayyam garden—a square of grass surrounded by a high mouldering wall with an archway in the side opposite the house leading to a tumbledown orchard of almond, peach, mulberry, pomegranate, and fig-trees. The house itself is white and fairly spacious, the roof a series of squat cupolas, and the romanesque windows look down across roofs and minarets and almond-blossom to the harbour. Two or three of the windows have latticed balconies, decrepit relics of the harem of some former owner. Near the house is a Turkish cemetery. Two or three cypresses, a shock of tussocky grass, and a number of tombstones with heads like stone cannon-balls leaning over at every angle so that they give the impression of talking and whispering to one another. I should never be surprised to catch sight of Amina (wasn't it?) at supper with her friend the ghoul. That used to be my favourite story in the Arabian Nights. My bedroom window looks out over this cemetery. So I may see her in the moonlight. But a more unhappy thought is that if I climbed out of my window and started to walk along the dusty road that curves inland past the cemetery I could go on walking until I came to Peking.

Tell David the only cars I have seen here are antique Fords. However, I hear of more luxurious machines belonging to the wealthy Levantine merchants, British, French, German, Austrian, Italian, and various other nationalities who live in wonderful villas with wonderful gardens in a suburb called Calamana of which my host tells me I shall have seen quite enough by the time I've accepted a few of the invitations that will soon be pouring in. I'm sending David a cargo of Turkish Delight, and the same to Prudence who will of course share it

The Four Winds of Love

with Miss Peachey I am surer than ever that my plan for her education is a good one, and when I get back to London I'll argue for it again

I have been seized with an ambition to write a play about Mary Queen of Scots for Gabrielle Derozier I saw her in Paris Extremely good in a play by Camille Varenne

I haven't a notion when I'll come back I feel as disinclined to leave this place as Odysseus to leave Calypso To-morrow we are making a fifteen-mile expedition to see the excavations of the ancient city of Miletus, and I shall get my first view of Maeander The site of the modern city was once an island Such silting up has there been on this coast

*Love to you all,
John*

BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
MILETO
March 16th, 1914

My dearest Miriam,

I am a lazy wretch not to have written to you before, but having fired off several geographical, topographical and archæological screeds in the first enthusiasm of my arrival I have not written a letter to anybody for three weeks This is an agreeable place in which to do nothing except gossip at tea-parties from noon to midnight as I ever found I haven't even the industry to read A book is merely an excuse to loll in a deck-chair and look first at almond-blossom, now at peach-blossom against a sky which has been almost perpetually cloudless since we arrived Emil and I don't even argue much, though in justice to him I must say he has been kept very busy since Blakeley, the Consul-General, went off for his holiday Fortunately Emil likes him I couldn't bear him A sleek, bearded fellow with a voice that sounds as

if his mouth was full of withered leaves External sleekness and an internal drought Emil is confoundedly competent at his job, and far too junior to Blakeley to rouse jealousy So his competence is appreciated and not resented I maligned myself when I declared I was utterly lazy, for I do work every morning at modern Greek with a pleasant young Austrian woman, that is to say an Austrian subject, for she is Polish by extraction, Levantine by birth, and English by education The only Austrian thing about her is her passport The reason I'm learning modern Greek is with a notion of really exploring Greece next year, and I will not be in the hands of an interpreter That's a most optimistic plan, for out here nobody feels the least security about next year They believe war in Europe to be inevitable They say that Germany is bound to take advantage of the Irish business to strike, and 1915 is apparently the year that would suit them best Most of the indignation, however, is against the way Turkey has been handled All the British Levantines are very pro-Turk, chiefly, I fancy, because they find them easier to swindle than the Greeks I am repeatedly being assured that the Turk is a gentleman, and of course gentlemanly behaviour is particularly dear to these expatriated Britons, many of whom have Levantine blood in their veins and often speak Greek and Turkish more fluently and more correctly than English

I think Emil derives a grim satisfaction from contemplating the life of this place on the slopes of a crater He declares it is a microcosm of Europe, and points out to me the *reductio ad absurdum* of nationality in the way nationality is here used purely as a commercial asset If it pays an Italian to take out Austrian papers he becomes an Austrian A Russian whose interests lie in the way of German commercial developments seeks the protection of a passport from the German Consul All alike in the eyes of the Turk are Franks They merely preserve an

official control of the place, but call it *giaour Mileto* The *Vali*—*Rewfiz Bey*—with whom I drank a cup of coffee is reputed to be strongly Anglophile, and not regarded with much favour by the Committee of Union and Progress However, he seems powerful enough to resist the intrigues of the Young Turks to remove him from power He told me he had hoped to become Ambassador at St James's instead of *Vali* of *Mileto* He was a Secretary at the Turkish Embassy in the year of the Diamond Jubilee He asked me why we were allowing the Germans to acquire the chief influence in *Stamboul*, and seemed depressed when I told him how impossible it was to stir up an Englishman at home to take the faintest interest in his country's foreign policy

I have wandered on like this about *Mileto* because what I really wanted to write and tell you about was *Gabrielle* I didn't intend to see her, but she was so thundering good in a play that I couldn't resist sending round a note So she asked me to lunch in her apartment You were perfectly right in your judgment of the effect on her of breaking off our *liaison* She was enchantingly reasonable, helped no doubt by a terrific success, and by being sure of being able to reign over the French stage for many years I left her as light-hearted as if I had just paid off a load of debt For a long time after I came home last year I was oppressed by the thought of having failed to live up to the fairy-tale she had woven round our love-affair, and the relief of knowing she was so much happier without me was intense That's why I've been enjoying myself so much here Such a comfortable feeling of irresponsibility Rather like the first days of the summer holidays I never enjoyed being 'social' half as much as here, because I have never remained as long as this so completely independent of any particular interest—personal, I mean It's so entertaining to observe bevvies of attractive and beautiful young women in the

mass without the slightest intention of falling in love with any of them. It may be too good to last, but I'm going to let it last as long as I can, and make a real attempt from love's sickness to fly. Hence my plan to explore Greece next year, provided there isn't a war.

Do you remember once long ago when we talked about the south wind of love coming after the east wind? When I look back at my life during the last twelve or thirteen years how true that symbol was. Everything seems to have gone the way of my young loves. That I was once a passionate Jacobite seems to have the same kind of political emotion as my love for Connie Fenwick whose name you have probably forgotten by now. That I once seriously dreamed of a Scotland that was independent seems now as fantastic as that I should have once thought the world was collapsing because I could not marry Rose Medlicott, who by the way I see in the last issue of the pleasantly economical penny 'Times' that reached here is now Lady Warburton. I have let her fade away as I have let Scottish independence fade. All my youth as I look back on it now from the present seems an orchard of blossom which never set. I shudder to think the way mere emotion might have carried me had it not been for you. I cannot imagine I would otherwise have enjoyed that inestimably valuable fallowness of the emotions during my time at Oxford. No doubt the academic discipline was most successfully kicked aside when I did go down, but those last five years of King Edward's reign were a good time in which to be enjoying one's riper twenties. The old boy diffused a geniality over the country. He glowed. He had an aroma like a Ribston Pippin. With a king like that the Liberals should have been able to make something of that 1906 majority, but the Victorian incubus was too heavy, especially when manipulated by that bastard of Disraeli's, the present Unionist Party. Still, Edward led the

The Four Winds of Love

country away from Germany. He introduced France as a respectable female friend for Britannia to meet. I know you have your doubts about the possibility of a really effective alliance between France and England, but I love France so profoundly that I can only enjoy this drawing together of the two countries, and don't mind what happens so long as they stand side by side in arms. I would rather be blotted off the map of Europe with France than remain on it with the help of Germany.

You are perhaps smiling to yourself at my refusal to imagine the possibility of being married to Gabrielle. But I would not for anything have missed that love affair. It may not be the perfection of a liberal education for an Englishman to love a Frenchwoman, but it is certainly the finest practical education he can have if he presumes to love any woman again. And for a dramatist it is the only education worth considering. The Frenchwoman has reduced the emotions to a Code Napoléon. I doubt if any mood of love has escaped her tabulation. Yet having reduced the whole of emotion to rules and aphorisms and dryasdust generalizations, she can dramatize a paragraph or turn a footnote into a lyric by her eternal zest for experiment. I feel now that no woman will ever again be capable of surprising me. Gabrielle came at the end of a series of minor romances and tedious surrenders to mere sensuality, reduced them all to insignificance because they were all included in herself, and has left me for some time, I hope, most comfortably immune from femininity. Nevertheless the south wind is still blowing with fertilizing warmth. The material advantages of two successful plays, neither of which Emil has been careful to tell me would have made the slightest difference to the world if they had never been put on the stage, are, I know well, nothing more than purely material. And my illness in New York has not been the valuable discipline it should have

been Instead of letting it take me to hitherto undiscovered tracts of the mind as illness should, I clung to what it seemed to be taking me away from and went back instead of forward when I recovered I fled from a harsh tyranny of the body to prostrate myself once more before a genial tyranny In my favour I can claim that I am aware of my failure to profit, and by whatever circumstance I may be tried in future, illness or ignominious public failure with a play or whatever it may be, I shall make a better shot at benefiting from the discipline America offered me a chance The wonder of that first evening Julius and I spent in New York was pitched away, by me at any rate What Julius has done with it we cannot say yet Fitzgerald, whom I wish you had known, is the only one of my earliest friends who has moved along the lines he laid down for himself He may be only a sprig of Irish blackthorn, but his blossom has set fruit—small bitter wild fruit perhaps, but unmistakably fruit Sometimes I have my doubts even of Emil He might end up with a Consulate-General and a C M G or even a K C M G Would you be glad? Perhaps you would Enough of these heartsearchings I'll lean back again in my deck-chair and stare at the sky through peach-blossom It's still too cold at night yet to have our guests star-scattered on the grass of this Omar Khayyam garden

*My love,
John*

BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
MILETO
Good Friday, 1914

Dearest Gabrielle,

I have written the first act of "Mary Queen of Scots," but it isn't very good, and I think I shall have to wait until I get back to England before I tackle the play

The Four Winds of Love

*seriously One cannot write in fascinating new places
And this place is more than usually fascinating and novel
More good-looking young women than I've ever seen en
masse, and they leave me completely cold My present
plans are to depart from here about the end of this month
and travel home by way of Athens, Sicily and Marseilles
I ought to reach Paris before the chestnut-blossom has all
faded, and I will read you the first act and show you my
scheme for the rest of the play I meant to write to you
for Easter, but with Easter on a different date in this
half-Greek city I lost my reckoning*

Bless you!

John

BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
MILETO

April 15th, 1914

My dear Julius,

*You've thrown out all my plans delightfully
Of course I'll meet you and Leonora in Italy as soon as
I can get there I'll take a boat from here to the Piraeus,
rush up to the Parthenon, and take the first boat on to
Messina Why couldn't we all go and stay at a place be-
tween Amalfi and Sorrento called Citrano? Anyway,
I'll telegraph to you in Rome as soon as I know when I'll
reach Italy We can meet at Naples and discuss where
we'll go I'll keep all my news until we meet I might
be with you by the beginning of May Love to Leonora
I've warned the Vice-Consul that I shall try to persuade
you to come and explore Greece with me in the autumn
and all wind up together here for Christmas!*

Yours ever,

John

Citrano had grown perceptibly even in a year Sites
had somehow been discovered for half a dozen new villas

in that tangle of houses hanging over the great semilune of golden sand. Four new *pensioni* had been opened. Above the town, on the last level stretch before the ravines in the immense cliffs of limestone that led steeply up to the wooded highlands of Monte Sant'Angelo, the walls of a large new hotel were rising fast which a hoarding proclaimed it to be the Hotel Excelsior and Imperial with 200 luxuriously appointed bedrooms and a variety of other attractions. Goats had been browsing on this site when John drove over to Citrano with Gabrielle Derozier on that day of oncoming *sciocco* last year. It was evident Citrano had ambitions to spoil its simplicity in competition with Sorrento, Amalfi, and Capri. Nevertheless, the charm of the place which had made him fall in love with it at first sight was as influential as ever. So when Wacey Langridge told him he could buy the Saracen tower on the horn of the western promontory, and that without a great deal of money's being spent a crackerjack place could be made of it, John opened negotiations at once and within a fortnight became the owner. The price he paid was 7,000 liras (£275) which was not more than three times as much as it was worth and according to Wacey could be considered a bargain, for in the purchase price of the tower, which really was in a remarkably good state of preservation, about a couple of acres of bare rock and half an acre of rosemary, lentisk, and genista were included.

The prospect from the top of the tower whichever way one turned to gaze over the castellated parapet was at present faultless, though it was agreed that when the Hotel Excelsior and Imperial was in full blast a garish crown would have been stuck on the huddle of white and blue and pink and yellow houses of Citrano. However, the eyes could always be raised to the remote primeval groves of Monte Sant'Angelo or lowered to the Marina and the tumbledown little port formed by the opposite promon-

tory which ran farther out into the sea and was crowned by no hotel but by the church of our Lady of Citrano, whose long black face in that Byzantine picture of hers had appeared to many a distracted mariner when he called upon her over the howling of the storm and remembered her church on the headland of home with its green-tiled dome gleaming between calm sea and cloudless sky, that church hung with many a model in glass case of the buffeted ships she had saved. And if one tired of that happy populous view one could gaze westward along the sweep of limestone cliffs rising sometimes a sheer thousand feet but riven here and there by fissures running down to sandy coves, or gaze across the islets of the Sirens, dreaming sea-monsters on the placid summer sea, to where the gothic bulk of Capri passed through countless changes of colour from the apricot of dawn to noon's chalcedony and the clouded hyacinth of dusk. And if such a view could pall there was still the wide glittering expanse of the Tyrrhenian southward, with no thought of land till Africa.

"It certainly is a corking view," Wacey Langridge declared. "And if you spend about 10,000 liras you'll have as nice a place as any on this coast, and what's more for a quarter of what you'd have had to pay for it."

Meanwhile, there was the problem of immediate lodgings. This was solved by the departure of two of Augusto's guests at the Albergo delle Sirene whose morals had been scandalizing the rest of the hotel ever since they arrived in March and whose signs of approaching impecuniosity gave the proprietor an excuse to be rid of them at the price of letting a week's pension go unpaid. As soon as this was arranged, John telegraphed for Julius and Leonora who had stayed behind in Sorrento until accommodation in overcrowded Citrano was fixed up.

Athene Langridge was in a flutter of anxious hospitality and greatly distressed that she could not put up Julius and Leonora at the Villa Allegra, but as Wacey had

packed a larger bunch of folk into it already than the Allegra had ever held before she had no reason to feel inhospitable. Anyway the two guests of ambiguous morals and uncertain financial stability had had the two best rooms in the Sirene, opening out on a terrace that served only them and thus giving the newcomers what amounted to a private sitting-room under the thatch of cut genista boughs which took the place of an awning when the May weather was set fair and rain was unimaginable.

Leonora surprised John on the first morning when they were drinking their coffee together out on the terrace by telling him that Julius had gone to church.

"Gone to church?" he gasped.

"Yes, he's been going to church quite a lot even before we crossed over to Europe."

"Do you mean to Catholic churches?"

"Sure. I guess he's thinking of turning Catholic."

"Leonora, you amaze me. How do you feel about it?"

"Why, I believe I'd be pretty glad if he did. He's kind of a responsibility. And I'd be willing to share with religion what I wouldn't share with another woman."

"But your people? Won't Mr Blakiston mind?"

"Why, I dare say Poppa would rather he became a Methodist or an Episcopalian or something folks more or less take for granted as respectable. But if I tell him I think it's best for Julius to be a Catholic he won't worry. He's had a success with the orchestra Poppa gave him."

"Dear Leonora, I do love the way you said that. I love too the way Poppa produces orchestras as a lesser magnate might present his son-in-law with a box of cigars."

"Well, Poppa's glad to see me so happy."

"You *are* happy? Isn't that grand?"

"Why, John, I'm terribly happy," she murmured softly, with that in her voice which thrilled him to hear. "And I think Julius is happy too. You will ask him some

time, John? And tell me what he says? I'd just love to hear what he tells you "

John was overwhelmed with a sudden immense affection for Leonora. She had always seemed so self-sufficient and hard and bright, lovely and trim like a little golden humming-bird preoccupied only with extracting the honey from life.

"You see, Julius is afraid if he doesn't take me for granted folks will think he's tagging around at the orders of a rich wife. Oh, he's a dear," she added quickly. "Don't think I'm complaining. You don't think that, John, do you?"

"I know exactly what you mean. He was just the same with me over that play we did together. So afraid lest I or anybody else should think he'd been helped by my offering him the music of it to write that in the end he made me a little exasperated by his indifference to what became of it. You haven't met his mother yet?"

"No, I'm scared to death of meeting her."

"You'll love her and she'll love you," John declared. He was reproaching himself for not having given Miriam a picture of the true Leonora and promising himself to write off this very day an enthusiastic account of her daughter-in-law. "But mind you, Leonora, he is very much in love with you. When he told me first about your engagement I practically accused him of marrying you for your money, and though naturally you wouldn't expect Julius to go into rhapsodies about anybody or anything, I was quite convinced that he was marrying you for yourself and only paid attention to the money as a welcome means to an end. But do you really believe he's contemplating becoming a Catholic?"

"I think that's the real reason he was so anxious to come to Europe."

"But he could have become a Catholic in America."

"Oh, yes. But I guess he wanted to have another look

at Europe and make sure it wasn't just a way of escape "

"Of escape from what?"

"Oh, just from American life "

"But he enjoys American life "

"I know, but I can't believe that somebody brought up like Julius wouldn't want to escape from it at times I know he does I couldn't explain just what I mean, but I can understand what he might find in the Catholic religion "

"You haven't thought of turning Catholic yourself?"

"Even if I had I wouldn't dare say a word about it to Julius He'd think I was butting in on his private affairs "

"Look here, you mustn't overdo this indulgence of Julius's egotism And anyway if he is serious about becoming a Catholic he'd have to want you to become a Catholic or else the whole business would be a piece of insincerity However, he hasn't become a Catholic himself yet, and I find it difficult to believe he ever will "

"Well, he's always reading books about religion And when we were in Rome, did we go the round of all the churches? We certainly did "

"But he took you with him That doesn't look as if this religious business was an escape from you, anyway "

"Oh no, Julius likes to have me around I do know that, John Even when he's writing music he likes to have me in the room with him knitting That's what he likes to have me do And I just abominate knitting "

"He must be an object of veneration to the down-trodden husbands of your country?"

"But Mamma was half Jewish, and I've inherited something in her direction Anyway, I'm terribly happy with Julius "

"And you deserve to be I'm so glad we had our coffee together like this I'm just beginning to appreciate you, Leonora "

Julius made no allusion to church when he came back, and John was too wise to mention it first. Nor did he comment when about a week later walking with Julius down one of the narrow streets that led to the Piazza they met the parish priest and he stopped to greet Julius with particular cordiality. As they parted he heard the *parroco* say

"Allora ci rivedremo domani all' ora solita. Evvero? Be'!"

"I suppose," Julius asked, "you're wondering what I have to see the *parroco* about at the usual time?"

"If I supposed anything I took it he was indulging your new craze for ecclesiastical architecture," John replied.

They walked on in silence until Julius said

"Well, you'll have to know presently. As a matter of fact, I'm being instructed before being received into the Church."

"A sound step," John commented.

"Oh, you think so? You don't seem much surprised."

"I've considered it myself very often. Why should I be surprised by somebody else?"

"What keeps you from going beyond consideration?"

"Merely lack of an assured faith in the truth of the Christian religion, and you'll admit that is rather a steep hurdle?"

"I first considered becoming a Catholic when I lived in that house of mine in Galicia."

"If I'd stayed there much longer that wonderful priest might have turned me into a Catholic."

"He was a wonderful chap," Julius agreed. "But he was extremely discouraging toward my fancy to become a Christian and a Catholic. He said he thought I was at too impressionable an age to take a step like that—at once too old and too young. Apparently my mother had given her full consent too. Perhaps he was right. However, I've made up my mind now. It's useless for me to think

any more about music until I have bound myself to a definite creed and attached myself to a rigid morality and an exacting set of religious obligations. It's not insignificant that nearly all the greatest creative musicians have been Christians and most of them Catholics. I first realized fully what the lack of a positive belief in an objective truth meant when I saw *Parsifal*. Wagner would have avoided all that sentimental baying at the moon if he had taken a course with my friend the *parroco* of Citrano."

"Why have comparatively so few great poets been Christians let alone Catholics?" John asked. "Or dramatists? Or novelists?"

"I suppose because expression in words is more hampered than expression in music."

"You mean you couldn't be accused of writing an immoral or heretical piece of music?"

But further discussion was cut short by arriving on the Piazza where they were to meet Leonora who had gone with Athene Langridge to a tea-party at Mrs Heighington's villa Mon Repos, which on Wacey Langridge's earnest advice they had cried off. Mrs Heighington was the large widow of a midland manufacturer, so vain that even her widowhood to which was attached a comfortable income was a source of pride to her. Her chief occupation was devouring visitors to Citrano. If they escaped the Charybdis whirlpool of Mon Repos they were snatched by the Scylla of the Villa Bufalo, Contessa Del Bufalo, who although not a widow was almost the equivalent of one owing to the unimportance of the shrivelled little malaria-ridden Calabrian nobleman she had married. The Countess was an American. Her complacency over what she believed was her social supremacy in Citrano had been slightly disturbed this spring by an American Princess at "that poky little Villa Marigold." Princess Ortabelli was the daughter of a Chicago pork magnate, a kindly woman who was settling down into an incurable melancholy

brought on by a lifelong struggle with fat, which at the age of forty-five she had finally given up hope of reducing. The Prince, who was of Georgian origin, was outwardly a film-producer's dream of a ruthless Russian aristocrat. Bee's-winged rumour flying from the windows of Mon Repos and the Villa Bufalo declared the resemblance did not stop with the outward man. Prince Sarián Ortabélli, with his melodramatic moustache and overdressed, over-jewelled, and overscented body, swaggered up to where Wacey Langridge, John and Julius were leaning against the parapet of the Piazza with their backs to the view across the harbour, and observing the throng, while they waited for Athene and Leonora.

"Here comes the rutting elk," said John.

The Prince removed the long cigarette-holder from his mouth and waved it in greeting.

"Say, you folks, what about a little game of bridge at the Marigold to-night? The Princess would like to have you come around."

Almost before the Prince had had time to rasp out this invitation with that exaggerated nasal enunciation which he supposed disguised his foreign accent, it had been declined on the grounds that none of them played cards.

The Prince shook his head in bewilderment.

"Say, Langridge, I've been having a talk with the *guardia* and he tells me most of the British and German residents come to live here for one purpose only. I guess some kind of a Sodom and Gomorrah bust-up in Europe is bound to happen pretty soon. I'm astonished you have that fellow Geoffrey Noel inside your house."

"He happens to be a friend of mine."

The Prince conducted his next speech with his cigarette-holder.

"Well, you're a married man, married to a lovely American girl, and I suppose you think you can have what friends you like without causing talk. But you're an

American citizen, and it's the duty of every American citizen to set his face against this kind of thing "

"Look here, Ortabelli, if you're so darned sensitive about this kind of thing, what brought you to Citrano?" Wacey asked

"I wouldn't have brought the Princess here on any account if I'd realized the kind of place it was But I'm not saying a word against Citrano or the Citranitani What I'm objecting to are these British and German degenerates who give the place a bad name "

"Here's Noel coming across the Piazza now," said John

The Prince stalked away, scowling

Geoffrey Noel was a man whose head even at fifty had a classic beauty which deserved better than to be robbed of its full effect by the shortness of his legs He had left England in some scandal of the 'nineties and had been living in Citrano ever since Some fifteen years ago he had taken pity on an American musician who had reached Citrano in utter destitution and married her A year later by an utterly unexpected turn of fortune she had inherited an income of forty thousand dollars a year For a time Noel had lived with his wife in Paris, but she had tired of his feebleness and had sent him back to Citrano on an assured allowance which according to Noel was never paid punctually He had a pleasant little villa with a roomful of books, and was perpetually busy at what he called his work, which consisted of accurate but stilted translations from the Greek Anthology, the French symbolist poets, and the one or two contemporary Italian authors who were beginning to show signs of grasping that the year 1914 A D had been reached He was looked after by an ugly old female cook and a series of handsome ephebi, whose amorous pursuit of Citrano maidens was his chief anxiety It was a stock Citrano story that Noel could be seen any fine night standing with a lantern in his door and whistling

home the errant youth of the moment. However, Noel was a scholar, and a wit, even if with Oscar Wilde he believed that repetition was the soul of it. John found him interesting, and would betake himself to Noel's booklined room and listen to his innumerable tales of Citrano worthies and unworthies. One day, Noel had promised him, the fantastic tale of his own marriage should be told.

"When we are—m-m-m—a little more intimate—m-m-m—my dear man."

That rumbled ground-bass was the inevitable accompaniment of all Noel's remarks, and need not be repeated in print.

This afternoon Noel was dressed in a suit of creamy Citrano homespun which helped his legs to look longer than they were and allowed the observer to note his classic features crowned with iron-grey wavy hair and set off by a becoming sunburn.

"Why, hullo, Noel. Prince Charming bolted when he saw you coming across the Piazza," said Wacey.

"Dreadful creature," exclaimed Noel, shuddering with a feminine gesture. "I've just come away from Scylla's tea-party. I met rather an intelligent German—Baron von Koenig or some such name—who tells me that we are mad not to realize his country means to fight us. I was quite taken aback. So like a tip from the horse's mouth."

"Have you met that insufferable German from the Sirene who thinks that the only English writer we have produced for fifty years is Oscar Wilde, as he calls him?" John asked. "And when I told him we didn't consider Wilde a writer of the first class he had the nerve to say to me with the most pompous air of condescension, 'Ach, naturally I understand you English cannot accept him for morality, but in Germany we do not think that is of importance when estimating the grandeur of a poet.'"

Noel wriggled. He was too much an amateur of poetry to agree with the German, but he was longing to tell

them how once long ago Oscar Wilde had looked at him in a restaurant and evidently leant over to ask his companion if he knew who he was. It was the most cherished souvenir of Noel's life, that obvious admiration, it and the publication in the *Saturday Review*, during the palmy days of Max, of his translation of one of Heredia's sonnets. However, he did not feel Wacey Langridge would appreciate the reminiscence, so he forbore to give it.

"And where are your lady wives?" he enquired instead.

"They've been to a tea-party at the Heighington's," said Wacey.

"Here they are. The whirlpool of Charybdis has not finally engulfed them."

"Come on. It's time for a cocktail," Wacey called to Athene and Leonora. "You're coming, Noel?"

"No, no, thanks so much. But I've been working all day on rather a difficult—well, not to be modest, I've actually ventured to attempt a translation of Mallarmé's *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*."

By the time the title was out Noel's voice had sunk to a whisper of awe at his own rashness.

"And one baffling line is in my head. I think I'll take a little walk and try to subjugate it. You didn't notice if my Francesco went along this way? I sent him out for some *napolitani*, and he hasn't come back yet."

John had noticed Francesco laughing and talking with a sloe-eyed *contadina*, but he had already heard the tale of Noel and his attendant youths and was discreet. He pulled out a packet of cigars from his pocket.

"Can you smoke *toscani*?"

"Oh, how very kind of you, Ogilvie. But I don't see why you should. I dare say that boy of mine is back by now."

Noel took the *toscano* at last and breaking it in two lit one half. Then with the suggestion of a self-conscious wriggle he sidled away across the Piazza.

"He's a good fellow, but I don't wonder Ortabelli finds him hard to appreciate," observed Wacey

Athene and Leonora had reached them by this time, and Julius who had been silent since they reached the Piazza asked Leonora if she had enjoyed herself

"Did I enjoy myself, Mrs Langridge?"

"Why, I was just going to ask you the same question, Mrs Stern," said Athene with a laugh "But a cocktail sounds terribly good to me I'm just withering for a Martini "

They all moved across the Piazza to the Café Umberto Primo, more usually known as Fofò's

Alfonso Massa was a Neapolitan who had visited Citrano first early in the last decade of the nineteenth century as the attendant of an eccentric German baron, one of many northerners drawn by excess of fog, snow and Gothic architecture to travel in search of sunlight and a classic beauty unshadowed by the dingy gloom of museums That this search should so frequently involve an interest in the living model had long been proverbial among Italians, and Latin cynicism required no enlightenment from psycho-analysis to understand what inspired this pursuit of a romantic and ideal beauty Soon after the German had arrived in Citrano with Fofò Massa he had fallen in love with the ideal form of a seventeen-year-old Citranitano whose future he desired to improve by a winter in Rome Simultaneously Fofò himself had been much attracted by the plump young daughter of old Gargiulo who kept a wineshop in the Piazza Assunta Gargiulo happened to be her father's only child, and such an exceptional opportunity fanned Fofò's susceptibility to a flaming passion He had handled his employer with skill An admirably feigned jealousy had secured him what might be termed alimony of ten thousand liras, in exchange for which he had allowed the Baron to depart without a breath of public scandal Such a man at once

convinced old Gargiulo that he would make an excellent son-in-law. Fofò and Assunta were married and within twelve years had provided him with ten grandchildren. Old Gargiulo whose pride had always suffered from the singularity of Assunta rejoiced in this fecundity, and soon relinquished the management of the wineshop in order to sit patriarchally in the loggia of the house in the family vineyard some two miles away from Citrano itself.

In the course of his travels with the eccentric German baron Fofò had observed various cafes that attracted Bohemians of every kind. Capri had a particularly successful example in the Hiddigeigei of Morgano. Painters who came to Citrano were made welcome and paid for their drinks with mural decorations. Poets wrote verses in praise of Fofò and his wine. Fofò's became famous. It was the foundation indeed of the rapidly increasing prosperity of Citrano. Fofò and Augusto did not make the mistake of quarrelling with one another. With Don Rocco Picarelli the owner of the largest establishment for extracting money out of foreigners for everything except drinks, food, and lodging they formed a triumvirate whose power nobody ventured to dispute. Don Alfonso Massa, Don Augusto Di Fiori, Don Rocco Picarelli. The company building the new Hotel Imperial and Excelsior had not failed to appease that miniature *camorra*. All three of the triumvirate had been allotted shares. There had been a moment when Don Augusto was a little difficult, but he was persuaded that a new hotel would enable him to raise his own prices slightly without injuring the character or custom of the Albergo delle Sirene, and the advantage to his other interests was obviously so great that he withdrew his opposition. He and Fofò had a private arrangement by which the profits on all imported liquors sold in bottles to the foreign residents were shared between them. In public they pretended to be jealous of one another's sales, which was

good for business, because Mrs Heighington after ordering two bottles of vermouth from Fofò would feel bound to order one from Augusto as well to avoid any suggestion of favouritism, and so it was with all the resident *forestieri*, who always impressed on the newcomer the necessity of avoiding any occasion for jealousy. It was the first thing everybody impressed on John when it was known he had bought the Torre Saracena and intended to become *Citranitano di Citrano*.

Fofò's was crammed when the Langridges, the Sterns and John Ogilvie arrived there for drinks on that golden afternoon of May in 1914, but there was always room for one more table and half a dozen chairs outside, where Fofò himself quickly accommodated them. The Langridges were among his best customers, and the sharp eyes in that sleek baby face of his had already noted John's readiness to stand drinks all round as likely to set him quickly among the profitable *élite*. It was difficult to trace in that sleek baby face the classic features which had allured the German baron a quarter of a century ago, but if Ganymede had married a dark-eyed Citranitano girl and produced ten little Citranitani and had a finger in every profitable Citranitano pie for over twenty years, the father of gods and men might have been astonished at the trouble he once gave himself to carry him off to Olympus.

"Signor Noel is notta to come?" he enquired when his guests were seated.

"No, he has lost Francesco," said Wacey.

A light twinkled in Fofò's eyes as brief as the light admitted by a camera's shutter for an instantaneous exposure. They were already as blandly sly again as a mandarin's when he shook his head and murmured that the young men of to-day were less conscientious than those of once upon a time. Perhaps that brief flash had lighted up a picture of himself giving the slip to the German Baron in order to steal an hour with Assunta.

They sat in *al fresco* contentment, sipping their gin and Italian. The clink of glasses and chatter of conversation in half a dozen languages enhanced the serenity of the Gulf motionless in a sheen of palest blue beyond the parapet of the Piazza against which the idlers leaned gossiping. In the doorways of the shops round the other three sides the owners were standing eyeing the throng, for business was over for the day. One corner of the Piazza was shaded by a large chestnut-tree which the shopkeepers in that direction had tried to have cut down because they fancied it obscured the display of their wares. The *forestieri*, however, combined to avert such a piece of vandalism, and the triumvirate, whatever their private opinion of creatures that made such ado about the lopping of a tree, exerted their influence on behalf of the chestnut's survival.

"You're going to like living here, John," Wacey told him.

"He certainly is," Athene echoed.

"Hullo," exclaimed Wacey. "There's Maxim Gorki. He must have come over from Capri to stay with Ostákov."

"Is that really Maxim Gorki?" Leonora asked, staring in awe at a tall gaunt man with long drooping light brown moustaches who was slouching across the Piazza accompanied by about eight or nine men and women, the latter all dressed in that style of arty sloppiness which marked them out as revolutionaries. John's mind leapt back to the office of the *Isis* in Oxford and a green volume called *Twenty-Six Men and a Girl* which the editor had suggested he should review. It had seemed savagely outspoken twelve years ago.

"There's quite a colony of exiles here and at Capri," said Wacey. "I know Ostapov pretty well. Would you like to come around with me one evening?"

He was speaking to John and Julius. John thought he should like to go very much. Julius said nothing would

induce him to go, with such emphasis they all stared at him

"Well, dear, don't be so fierce about it," said Leonora "Nobody's going to take you to Mr Ostapov's against your will "

Then suddenly with equal emphasis Julius declared that he would go to Ostápv's whenever Langridge named the evening

Soon after this Athene grew absent-minded and when recalled to the company by her husband became wildly hospitable

"You're wanting to go home, Mrs Langridge?" suggested Leonora

"Why perhaps I don't want to break up this perfectly good party but the Carters will be wondering what's become of us I can't think, dear, why you didn't have Harry and Maud meet us at Fofó's "

"They're all right," said Wacey "What you're worrying over is the Heir Apparent "

"Well perhaps you'll pardon me, Mrs Stern, if I go along I like to see Arthur's all right when I've been out all afternoon I have a lovely nurse but "

And in a flutter of farewells Athene left them

"I'll be right along, dear," Wacey called after her

He must have signed to Fofó, because another round of drinks was brought out by the *piccola* as the madonna-faced girl waitress Concettina was called with that affectionate inclusion in the family which marked service in Italy John thought with a sigh of English waitresses Nobody called them little ones

Wacey began to talk—indeed to boast about his wife's perfection, and John was pleased when Leonora said a little sharply that she was surprised he let so charming a wife walk home by herself

Wacey smiled, and embarked on one of those inter-

minable arguments he so much enjoyed Julius rose at last, obviously irritated, and the party broke up

On the way back to the Sirene he told Leonora he considered Wacey rather fatuous

"Oh, he was just showing off," she said

"I don't wonder he bores her," Julius snapped

"Does he?" John echoed in surprise

"Do you mean to say you haven't spotted that? A damned fine observant dramatist you are!"

"She doesn't bore *him*," said Leonora "He just ordered that last round of drinks to give himself the pleasure of talking about her You won't ever order one more round, Julius, because you must talk about your elegant little wife"

Julius scowled

"Oh my, I just adore to make you give that look," she cried, clapping her hands "It's like having some savage wild animal for a pet"

Soon they were walking into the dining-room at the Sirene, bowing to the other guests as they passed between the tables—to the two middle-aged rosy-cheeked German ladies from Hanover, who took their easels to the belvederes of Citrano and squeezed ultramarine and cobalt recklessly on their palettes to the two middle-aged but rather pale English ladies from Yorkshire who brought the new flowers they found each day down to dinner in a tooth-glass that they might be identified by a bespectacled young German with a peeled nose and short knickerbockers revealing smooth thighs flushed with a painful roseola of sunburn to the English clergyman recovering from a serious illness, whose parishioners had subscribed to give him a real holiday and whose wife was in a continual state of agitation because she feared the strangeness of the food might offset all the advantages of novel surroundings and reliable health to the young Swedish photographer burnt so brown that his light blue

eyes looked painted on his face and his yellow hair like dusty flax in a grate to the French archæologist who always returned the passing nod of greeting by rising from his chair and making a profound obeisance, his napkin tucked into his waistcoat giving the courtesy the air of some priestly ceremony to the sourly complacent Prussian who would argue with John about the lack of English appreciation of Oscar Wilde to the pop-eyed and prosperous American bachelor in a tussore suit whose arrival on the Marina stirred the urchins drowsing against the rocks to a wild chatterbox activity in their eagerness to strip and dive into the limpid water for the 50-centesimi pieces of which the pop-eyed bachelor always had a pocketful to one and all in that sun-bespelled *albergo* during the May of 1914.

They bathed on the Marina, enjoying the pleasure of being able to lie in the sun afterwards on the sand with a freedom of semi-nudity that was frowned upon in England. They sat gossiping at Fofò's after the morning bathe, and again before tea, and again after tea, and again after dinner, watching the *tarantella* danced two nights a week, only to be told by the old habitués of Citrano that the *tarantella* was not what it was since it had become a deliberate entertainment. They went to tea with Mrs Heighington at Mon Repos and with Countess Del Bufalo at the Villa Bufalo and even with Princess Ortabelli at the Villa Marigold. They invited Geoffrey Noel to drive with them and listened to him mumming and humming over the figure of the young Swedish photographer and went to tea with him and listened to him mumming and humming about his translation of *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*. They had some bully parties at the Villa Allegra, at which guests and hosts all talked at once when they were not dancing to records of ragtime on Wacey's new Victrola. They ate prawns and crayfish. They drank a great deal of the light white wine

of the country, and many glasses of Strega and the potent Cento Erbe, not to mention gin and vermouth. They were rowed out to the Siren islets and spent a sun-steeped day, lying in the fast-parching aromatic herbage, content to do no more than watch the lizards darting away among the fragments of broken mosaic which time had left here to commemorate the pavement of some old Roman. He long ago had reclined here like them, eyeing the same stupendous battlements of the peninsula, the same westward crescent of land to the horn of Minerva's cape, the same Capri turning from apricot to woodsmoke between dawn and dusk, the same long eastward sweep to where once flowered the rose-gardens of double-bearing Paestum, the same crystalline Tyrrhenian melting into the sky. They explored the grottos along the coast, while swifts chattered high above and the pigeons seemed to break from the cliffs like chips of limestone made animate. There was one grotto undiscovered by tourists which rivalled Capri's Grotta Azzurra. The entrance was low, but within the roof rose to a high dome robbed of seeming solidity by the play of watery reflections, the air was bloomed like a plum, and the water was a molten sapphire streaming from the oars in silver fire. Swimming therein the human body turned to mercury, suffering a sea change into something rich and strange.

"Can you believe she's still yours?" John asked of Julius when Leonora plunged to win that transfiguration. "This is a lovelier apparition than any sea-green Siren."

Neither of them for a minute or two could bring himself to dive in rivalry of such beauty, but sat watching her.

"*Bella! Molto bella!*" sighed the boatman, hanging on his oars.

"It's most frightfully cold in here," Leonora called shrilly, turning on her back and kicking the water into moonlit snow.

"Arethusa arose from her couch of snows in the

Acroceraunian mountains," John shouted as he dived "My god, Leonora, you're right!" he gasped a moment later

They raced each other like glittering fish to the entrance of the grotto and the warm sea outside, climbing presently back into the boat to dip their fingers into an oily bowl of anchovies and to drink some of the rough red wine that tasted so good with bread and garlic. Then on mattresses of nets they slept away the early afternoon.

A day or two after that expedition to the grotto they felt they really must make an effort to ascend Monte Sant'Angelo, if not to the very summit at any rate as far as the great woods of beech and chestnut. They started early in the morning by way of the ravine at the back of the new hotel that was being built. A winding path had been cut through the dense growth of arbutus, holm-oak, wild locust, myrtle, and cytissus, the green twilight of which the air did not reach, so that the sweat poured from them after an hour's ascent. At the head of the ravine they reached a tract of rolling heathy land and then wound round a bastion of the mountain, the sea nearly two thousand feet below, saved from dizziness by the stout Aleppo pines which bordered the path. The pines vanished to give way to silvery-grey bushes of the anthyllis called Jove's beard. From here they descended into a valley where groves of mighty chestnuts that might have been coeval with old Cronos himself offered a sublime repose. Here they ate their bread and garlic and *cacciocavallo* cheese, washing it down with the rough red wine they had carried so far in their satchels.

"We'll go no higher," Julius declared.

"Thank god," sighed Leonora. "It's the loveliest walk I ever took, but, honey, I'm beat."

So they lolled on the cool grass and fell asleep while they were drowsily tracing the patterns of those great

striated trunks to wake in the murmurous warmth of the afternoon John produced a small volume from his pocket and began to read

"What's that?" Julius asked suspiciously

"Browning's *Dramatic Romances*"

"Oh, I've no use for Browning"

"But listen to this He's tiresome and second-rate in bulk, but sometimes he does hit it with a bang It's *The Englishman in Italy* written at Piano di Sorrento after a walk like ours"

"But this is all about *sciocco*," objected Julius "And there's not a sign of *sciocco* to-day"

John read on

*"As up still we trudged
Though the wild path grew wilder each instant,
And place was e'en grudged
'Mid the rock-chasms and piles of loose stones
Like the loose broken teeth
Of some monster which climbed there to die
From the ocean beneath—
Place was grudged to the silver-grey fume-weed
That clung to the path,
And dark rosemary ever a-dying
That, 'spite the wind's wrath,
So loves the salt rock's face to seaward*

"I wonder why he calls it dark rosemary," John broke off to speculate "His observation is always so accurate

*"And lentisks as staunch
To the stone where they root and bear berries,
And what shows a bunch
Coral-coloured, transparent, with circlets
Of pale sea-green leaves,*

"That's beautifully observed and recorded, though I still don't understand 'dark' as an epithet for rosemary But listen to this bit

The Four Winds of Love

*"And God's own profound
 Was above me, and round me the mountains,
 And under, the sea,
 And within my heart to bear witness
 What was and shall be
 Oh, heaven and the terrible crystal'
 No rampart excludes
 Your eye from the life to be lived
 In the blue solitudes
 Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement!
 Still moving with you,
 For, ever some new head and breast of them
 Thrusts into view
 To observe the intruder*

"I think that's never been said so well by anybody else
 And then this Leonora, listen to this, and remember our
 expedition to the Siren isles

*"So, I turned to the sea, and there slumbered
 As greenly as ever
 Those isles of the siren, your Galli,
 No ages can sever
 The Three, nor enable their sister
 To join them,—half-way
 On the voyage, she looked at Ulysses—
 No farther to-day*

"That must be the isle of Isca further to the west We
 haven't been there yet

*"Fortu, shall we sail there together
 And see from the sides
 Quite new rocks show their faces, new haunts
 Where the siren abides?
 Shall we sail round and round them, close over
 The rocks, tho' unseen,
 That ruffle the grey glassy water
 To glorious green?
 Then scramble from splinter to splinter,
 Reach land and explore,
 On the largest, the strange square black turret
 With never a door,
 Just a loop to admit the quick lizards,"*

"That Norman tower isn't on the largest," Julius put in

"Ah, but listen," John begged

*"Then, stand there and hear
The birds' quiet singing, that tells us
What life is, so clear?
—The secret they sang to Ulysses
When, ages ago,
He heard and he knew this life's secret
I hear and I know"*

"What is the secret?" Julius demanded scornfully

"He shares that with Ulysses "

"Like a couple of freemasons," Julius grinned "Well, finish the poem "

"The rest of it is rather silly "

Julius leant across and took the volume Presently he scowled

"Infernally silly Who was Robert Blah Browning that he thinks he can patronize the Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of the Rosary, and the Order of Preachers? Just a little bourgeois to whom the Muses gave a Cook's ticket for Italy If he can't understand more about a Catholic *fiesta* than this, how the hell does he think he shares life's secret with Ulysses and the Sirens?"

"All the same, he can paint a landscape," John insisted

"That's not enough to make a great poet "

"Angel children," Leonora broke in, "must you both argue on this divine afternoon? And anyway I think it's time we started down again if I'm not going to be a nymph with two shepherds for the rest of my life "

They plunged down seaward, taking short cuts through the tangled *macchia* until John and Julius simultaneously had their ankles ripped by the savage thorns that turn the sprays of the sweet wild smilax to whipsaws After that

they kept to the path and arrived at their hotel before dinner was half over, not waiting to change and bringing into the dining-room with them the perfume of a hundred aromatic shrubs and herbs which was perceptible even above the savoury smell of the young artichokes fried in oil

Apart from all they did together and in company, John and Julius had each his own private preoccupations. John was often busy overlooking the repairs to his tower which he had soon set in motion. Sitting on a rock by the water's edge and watching the workmen with their lime and mortar he would say to himself defiantly

"Or look for me, old fellow of mine
 (If I get my head from out of the mouth
 O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
 And come again to the land of lands)—
 In a sea-side house to the farther South,
 Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
 And one sharp tree—'tis a cypress—stands,
 By the many hundred years red-rusted,
 Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'er crusted,
 My sentinel to guard the sands
 To the water's edge For, what expands
 Before the house, but the great opaque
 Blue breadth of sea without a break?"

He intended to plant cypresses next autumn, though he should hardly live to see such striplings achieve that red-rusted bark. Meanwhile that stunted locust-tree looked old enough to have served John the Baptist with its beans.

The Torre Saracena was going to be a delightful retreat. By autumn the necessary repairs to the stonework would be finished. Should he sell the lease of the house in Millbank and make this his headquarters? England was becoming impossible with this party strife and weary air of politicians' talk. He could have Prudence out here for a year and start off her education with Italian. That

room at the top would make a splendid library—a room he had always wanted, with windows opening to the four winds. Should he change the name of the tower? Torre Quattro Venti? No, why change? Besides, it would always remain the Torre Saracena in this place where it had stood for some six or seven hundred years as guardian against the Sallee rovers of Islam. He would have two bedrooms on the first floor, with dining-room, kitchen, and a let's pretend bathroom on the ground-floor. That was space enough for anybody. Yes, the pick of the furniture from the little house on Millbank would be all he required, the rest he could buy in Naples. It should be completely ready by the Spring of 1915. England would be more than ever impossible if civil war really did break out in Ireland, because he should certainly volunteer to fight on the side that the damnable propaganda of party politics would have convinced most of his friends was the wrong side. If there was a civil war God send some of those squib-smoking politicians would be shamed into fighting. What jam to get a chance of potting one or two of the blighters! A pity Scotland had sold her soul for English gold. But had not Scotland's soul fled when they let Elizabeth murder Mary? And the soul of the Highlands had been driven forth when the chiefs were allowed to sell their clansmen to English imperialism. It was an old song now, all of it, and it would never be sung again. But Ireland was different. Ireland demanded the allegiance of every Celt whose own country had taken the well-laid prosperous road of the renegade. Yes, he would go back to London before August with Julius and Leonora to spend a couple of months clearing up and then get back here at the beginning of October. Wacey Langridge would keep an eye on the masons while he was away. He might take the Villa Marigold for the winter when that preposterous Georgian prince went back to Chicago.

While John was making his plans for the immediate future Julius was making his. The *parroco* had arranged for him to be received into the Church on the Thursday after Pentecost. That was the fourth of June. He had arranged for the ceremony to take place in the chapel of the nursing sisters, which would avoid unwelcome publicity.

The *parroco* was a man of much vigour of mind and notwithstanding a scrofulous tendency of considerable vigour of body. He deserved himself his favourite epithet for those he admired. He was *valente*. He regarded his conversion of Julius as the meridian of his career and a signal favour granted to him by Almighty God to mark the silver jubilee of his priesthood. Some ten years earlier he had given instruction to an extremely ritualistic Englishwoman and received her into the harbour of the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church. Yet that conversion had lacked something, for this Englishwoman was apparently in the habit of saying rosaries, making novenas, wearing scapulas, attending mass with every outward sign of devotion, and generally behaving so exactly like a real Catholic that one day in church seeing her staring intently at a confessional he had ventured to ask her if she wished to make her confession. She had replied that she wished first to make her formal submission to the Holy See. The *parroco* supposed her to have been guilty of active anti-clericalism, whereupon she had tried to explain to him the Church of England and the impossibility of her remaining a loyal Anglican. To this day the *parroco* mopped his brow when he thought of that lady's attempt to explain to him the Church of England.

"*Incomprendibile!*" he had gasped to a neighbouring parish priest. "The mystery of the Holy Trinity would be easier to understand."

He had duly received the Englishwoman into the

Church, and from time to time he was gratified by a letter assuring him of her spiritual contentment, but somehow the whole business had lacked the full flavour of an authentic conversion.

Signor Stern was a different proposition. In the first place he was a Jew. The *parroco* could not discover one instance of a Jew's having been baptised in the Archdiocese of Sorrento before. Perhaps when the Holy Office was functioning more actively there may have been examples of such conversions, but the records of them if they ever existed had vanished. Secondly, there was no question of that conditional baptism which the *parroco* had always felt took much of the savour from the reception of his previous convert. She had made it clear to him the ceremony was meaningless to her, had indeed almost implied it was a waste of water, a grave matter in Citrano at the dry September's end when she was received. Signor Stern's baptism would be on the high spiritual level of some of those glorious baptisms of the heathen in the palmy days of conversion. Satan was going to get a *colpo*, a *pugnalata* indeed, from the Reverendo Giuseppe Gelardi, *parroco* of Santa Maria di Citrano. Moreover, Signor Stern was an exceptional Jew. He was an intellectual and artistic Jew married to a very rich American wife. In those circumstances he should feel justified in asking him to sign the renunciation of the errors of *modernismo* imposed by His Holiness Pope Pius X. Not that he suspected his catechumen of modernism. Still, it was so improbable that he would ever again have an opportunity to present so searching a document for signature that the occasion must not be missed. The trouble with his other convert had been excess of eager credulity. Indeed, from what he heard, that was the trouble with most converts.

The Archbishop had been most flattering when he had driven over to Sorrento with the news of the fish he had

landed Perhaps he had suggested a little more optimistically than was justifiable the possibility of further conversions of *forestiers*—of Signora Stern and a *simpaticone* of an Englishman, Signor Ogilvie, not to mention Signor Noel, a name of the happiest augury Yes, perhaps he had suggested too prematurely to the Archbishop the likelihood of a miraculous draught of fishes from Citrano, *ma* the conjunction left all to the infinite mercy and wisdom and love of the *Padre Eterno*

The *parroco* himself would have been surprised to hear that it was his own simple faith which had clinched for Julius the resolve he had been gradually reaching over years It was so simple indeed that the blessed possessor of such faith took it for granted As a Latin he would have scoffed at a comparison between his faith and the faith of the flower which opens its petals to the sun He would have considered such a comparison a gross reflection on Almighty God's endowment of man with a soul To him it would have presented itself as an objectionable piece of sentimental pantheism Yet his own faith *was* the natural faith of a flower

On the other hand if he was unaware of the example he set by his faith he was tempted sometimes to hold in respect his own powers of theological dialectic, and Julius who was aware of this harmless little vanity would not have disillusioned him for anything The gratification of another's intellectual conceit was a light price to pay for his own intellectual security Besides, the step to which he was committed had brought him such mental relief that he was filled with love for this simple parish priest and finding that praise of his dialectic warmed him, he with his heart in a flame, had warmth to give in abundance

Two days before he was to be received, Julius went with John and Wacey Langridge to the house of Ostáпов He deliberately made of the occasion a symbolical finale

to his life as a non-Christian. In that large untidy studio filled with Russians talking as only Russians can of politics he beheld the microcosm of the Europe he was leaving for ever. He would carry back with him to America the consciousness of another Europe to which he would be genuinely linked for the first time.

Ivan Sidorovich Ostapov was one of many Russians who after the abortive revolution of 1905 had lived through a period of exile in Siberia from which he had never returned home, preferring to spend his time outside Russia in plotting ceaselessly for the next and greater revolution. He was a jovial plump man with a curly light-brown beard and twinkling vivid blue eyes. His boisterous manner and rich vinous laugh did not suggest the revolutionary. Perhaps the fact that he was much better off than the average Russian exile had kept him looking like a typically prosperous bourgeois. His intimate friend Oleg Dmitrievich Acatsatov with whom he shared this villa at Citrano was as lean and hungry-looking as Cassius himself.

The windows of the Villa Ostapov had been enlarged and the casements filled with plate-glass instead of sashes so that the views might be as extensive and unimpaired as possible. To-night through the big south window an almost full moon was shining across the crimped sea, and through an Æolian harp which somebody had fixed in the branches of a pine in the garden a gentle June breeze moaned sweet music. The studio was fumed with the savourless smoke of Macedonian cigarettes, to which the reek of a *napolitano* or *toscano* added pungency.

Julius sat by this window gazing at the clarity of the night air and wondering how long Wacey Langridge and John would be able to stand the muddle of humanity under this roof. He began to think he had overestimated the value of a symbolic finale to his life as a non-Christian. Above that babel of Russian, Italian, French and German

from figures standing, sitting, or reclining on wide divans, a lank woman with the leathery complexion of a tea-fiend and fingers stained with nicotine to an excremental yellow was almost screaming to a little man with hair like Shock-headed Peter and a face like a dried mushroom

"Not bourgeois democratic revolutionaries, Blumen-zweig! Not bourgeois democratic revolutionaries!"

"But I do say bourgeois democratic revolutionaries, Zoia Egoróvna And I say it again and again," the little man spat

"But why not simply revolutionary?" she shrilled "Why bourgeois and proletarian? Certainly you can speak of 'small bourgeois revolutionaries' if you must attribute to the small bourgeois everything you can't dispose of otherwise "

"You have adopted the ideology of Marxism, Zoia Egoróvna," declared the lean and hungry Acatsatov "But you have grafted it on an old-fashioned radical intellectualism Therefore 'revolutionary' has for you an independent meaning apart from its significance in the class struggle "

The babel all over the room grew louder

"We must form small armed groups and teach the workmen how to fight with the police "

"Yes, yes, that is the only method for street demonstrations "

"I am against terrorist tactics "

"If the floggings begin again we must attack them with the terror "

"That is capitulation to the Social Revolutionary doctrine "

"Among the English proletariat there are many revolutionary and socialist elements "

"Yes, yes, but they are all tied up with religion and Conservatism and social prejudices Class consciousness cannot lead the service and become the possession of all "

"You are merely a kind of Tolstoian "

"That is nonsense! That is nonsense!"

"Do not be angry, my young friend Men are not born Marxists "

"Ah, but Vladimir Ilyich attacks the Liberals too fiercely He is too hard "

"He is right to attack them "

The voice of Zoia Egorovna Martens shrilled again at this

"But our Liberals do not wish to break with Socialism They know that if they do they will collapse like the German Liberals Jaurès is an example to our Liberals Look at the French Radical Socialists!"

"It is just because of Jauresism that we must attack them "

"They make approaches to us and we strike at them!"

"Yes, because it is not for us to make eyes at Jaurèsism, to flirt and ogle and excite and deceive and corrupt in the style of the French Radical Socialists "

"The day of the revolution is nearer than any of us think "

"Yes, comrade, and the folly of the aristocrats and capitalists makes it probable that an armed uprising will be successful "

"If the workers of the world would unite "

"They are drugged with God "

"Ha-ha, that is good Yes, yes, stupefied by religion "

"When Gorki came over from Capri the other day "

"The Agrarian question is the first to be settled "

"And these mining companies' unions "

The babel rose and fell Ostapov wandered round with bottles of wine which he pressed upon the argumentative comrades, laughter rumbling in his deep chest Some drank, but most of them were arguing too excitedly to pay any attention to him In a corner, oblivious of the noise, two men brooded over a game of chess watched by

Langridge John was sitting on a divan talking to a girl with high cheekbones and blazing eyes who wore a smocked robe of some dull red material. Her legs were bare except for sandals.

"Play to us, Zlata," somebody cried.

And the demand was echoed from various corners of the room. Presently the girl sitting with John was standing in the middle of the room playing on the violin *czardas* and *mazurkas* with such passion that even the political arguments ceased and all had stopped to listen except apparently the two chess-players, who still brooded over their mimic warfare. Zoia Egoróvna even forgot to smoke for a while and lay back on one of the divans, her hands clasped behind her untidy hair, listening. Ivan Sidorovich, the host, ceased drinking and sat holding the hand of a pale girl with hectic cheeks who was reputed to be one of his three or four mistresses among the exiles in Citrano. Lia was her name. Olég Dmitrievich stood leaning against the wall and as he chewed at his finger-nails glowered at them. It had been rumoured that he and Ostapov would presently dissolve their friendship over Lia Leibovna Braude. Wacey Langridge had left the chess-players to take a seat beside John. It was evident from his attitude that from time to time when Zlata Pocrass stopped to tune a string he was taking credit to himself as a kind of *entremetteur*. 'See,' he appeared to be telling John, 'of what an unexpected little world in Citrano I have given you the freedom.' And John who would not be a jot taken in by Wacey's airs was smiling away and nodding courteously in that familiar fashion of his while his eyes were a thousand leagues away from his smile. At last Zlata Pocrass put aside her violin and flung herself down beside John amid applause and 'bravas'. Wacey, with a hint of having found a charming girl for John, somewhat obviously removed himself from the divan and returned to the chess-game.

Julius was seized with one of those uncontrollable impulses, surrender to which was wont to make him surly for a week afterwards. He walked across to Zlata and asked her in Russian if he had her permission to use her violin. She assented in surprise. The ideological babble had broken out again. Julius took the violin and swept it with a chord that seemed to string the company into an amazed silence. At that moment the Æolian harp in the pine-tree outside moaned.

"Wait, comrade, wait," cried Ostapov. "That animal is for ever in misery. It is time to settle its future for good and all."

With this he went to a bureau and took from one of the drawers a revolver with which from the window he aimed six shots at the horn standing in black profile against the moon.

"You'll bring the *carabinieri* down on us, infernal fool that you are!" cried Acatsatov.

"Hold your mouth, Olég Dmitrievich," retorted Ostapov. "Or I shall be reluctantly compelled to shoot you into silence like that devil of an Æolian harp."

A girl in a bright orange dress tied with a green girdle shrieked.

"Silence, Cleopatra Carlovna. Or that threat applies to you. I demand silence, comrades, for our guest. Continue please, *signore*," he said to Julius. "The ideology of a good Marxist does not permit an Æolian harp to display its lack of class-consciousness by destroying the harmony of the musical revolution. Solidarity, comrades. Continue please, *signore*."

With a loud hiccup Ivan Sidorovich collapsed on a pile of cushions, and while Julius played czardas wilder than any Zlata Pocrass had played he sat sniffing the barrel of his revolver as if it were a bottle of smelling-salts.

They don't know I am playing myself out of their schemes and revolutions and isms and ideologies, out of their agrarian

plans and divisions of land, out of their dirty little rags of papers printed in Zurich or Whitechapel They don't know that this dance which brings the tears to their hungry eyes is my dance out of the ghetto, out of the swarming myriads of Central Europe, out of the fleas and the grease and the lees, out of nineteen centuries of grubdom Yet though I am escaping from you, I love you, because you are the children of God, and whatever you may think, whatever you may say, whatever you may do, there is in all of you life, life, life, which you will hand on until in His time God will take that life to Himself, yes, though you with your isms and ologies should become as maggots in this world you would turn into a cheese, yes, though with your machines you should make of yourselves no more than cogs I love you because I pity you

And then an abrupt contempt seized Julius, for he saw how the love he had put into that impromptu was turning all those present to amorousness The girl Zlata her blazing eyes quenched by tears had flung herself over to lie with her head on John's shoulder, and he was holding her feverish hand in his

A little more of such music and they will all be coupling like the beasts of the field Look at them! The girl in the orange dress, the pale girl with hectic cheeks, even the lank and nicotine-stained Zoia Egorovna are rolling like cats Only the chess-players sit brooding austere over their game, insensible to the waves of physical desire I have set rippling in this smoky studio

He turned to look at the cold moon and the cool crimped ripples of the sea she washed with her silver beams

Good-bye, nineteen centuries that went to make me Farewell, fleas and grease and lees Farewell, isms and ologies And you, whom I can melt into desire with a few notes of music, listen, listen and let me freeze you into order again with the pattern of eternal truth

He looked again at the cold moon Marking the pattern of the sea she wove with silver, he played the

chaconne from the Bach Partita in D minor Gradually emotion departed from the gathered company Hands were disentangled Hair was smoothed Whisperings began This ordered sound was powerless to affect them Their disordered minds rejected it

But the chess-players whose brooding the wildest strain had failed to stir suddenly took their eyes from the pieces and sat up, listening The last thread of that great chaconne was unravelled Julius laid down the violin and slipped quickly away into the moonlight

Leonora was sitting up in bed reading when he returned The white expanse of the mosquito-net gave to her fragile form such insubstantiality that he was caught by a sudden dread of losing her He flung back the curtains and clasped her to him, seeking reassurance from the touch of her cheek, from the faint perfume of her corn-gold hair

"Leonora, never think I do not love you, and never think you are outside my happiness"

"Oh, honey, are you truly happy with me?"

"Completely"

She looked at him with sudden suspicion

"You haven't been talking about me with John?"

"What the devil do I want to talk about you with John for?"

"It would have been my fault if you had You see, I asked John if he thought you were really happy with me And I asked him to see if he could find out from you"

"John knew better than that," said Julius, knitting his eyebrows

"Ah, now don't put on that fierce look If you knew how it made my heart thump with joy when you pulled back the curtains of the mosquito-net and said what you did, you wouldn't ever scowl again And it's still thumping, Julius Put your hand there and feel"

"It throbs like a bird between one's hands," he mur-

mured "Listen, my Leonora The day after to-morrow I shall be a Catholic I haven't discussed the business with you because I was afraid you might think I was expecting you to follow me dutifully along the same path It would of course make me ineffably happy if you really did some day become a Catholic yourself, but only if you felt compelled to do so Perhaps that will happen, for I'm in a mood to expect Divine favours Only you're not to think that my wanting you to do so has any bearing on the matter And, mind you, I'll damn well know if you make that your reason But this remember always What I am doing can only make me love you more I could give you a hundred admirable arguments for what I am doing, but the only valid reason is incommunicable, a something in myself which drives me to do it "

"Honey, I love you so very very much," she sighed "Sometimes I've wondered if it was best for you to have married me, but I don't believe anybody could love you more than I do I loved you the first evening you dined at our house, but I made myself hard-boiled about it because I thought you'd never love me the way I loved you And I did want you to Only if you hadn't I'd still have wanted you to marry me Oh, but don't let's talk any more about it I just want you to hold me close, honey, close close "

He was still awake long after Leonora was fast asleep, lying with her head in the crook of his arm She had often slept like this before when passion was spent, but never with such a buoyancy as to-night In the first tremulous grey of dawn she stirred and murmured a broken word, then floated nearer to him, and the softness of her hair was the last thing of which he was conscious before he too slept

Julius did not see John until lunch and was told that he and Wacey Langridge had left Ostapov's villa soon after

himself Wacey had insisted on his coming back to the Allegra where they had kept things going until nearly two o'clock

"I thought you were getting on very well with that girl who lent me her violin"

It was characteristic of Julius that this was what she was to him, not the girl who had played the violin herself

John uttered a contemptuous exclamation. He had not decided to live in the Torre Saracena in order to philander with Russian refugees. If anybody was responsible for the emotional atmosphere of Ostapov's studio it had been Julius by playing like that

"One of the chess-players told me he'd heard you play that chaconne in St Petersburg in 1899. He said it was the most miraculous performance he had ever heard given by a boy. And I seem to remember your playing it at Claremount Gardens just after I first met you"

"Very likely," said Julius indifferently. "It soon cooled off most of that anarchist crowd last night"

"Julius, you're talking as you talked that day when you met me coming out of the church in Cracow after I had had that strange experience of annihilating time as we think of time by mortal standards"

"Yes, I remember. I had played a Bach sonata at a studio party in Cracow rather like last night's except that they were all chattering about the freedom of Poland instead of Marxist ideology"

"Yes, and there was a girl with corn-coloured hair who played Chopin. She had hair the same colour as Leonora's. And you were annoyed because after they listened to Chopin they seemed to fidget when you played Bach. It was then you decided to give up playing in public for two years and first talked about your house among the cornfields"

"And to-morrow morning I shall take the road which was first shown me then," said Julius. "I can't think why

you who had a much more explicit vision of the Divine Creation have allowed it to lead you nowhere "

"Lack of secure faith," John replied

"Yes, because you have let your mind wander in too many different directions, because you have wasted your own creative impulse on what have really been nothing more than a series of emotional hand-holdings like your performance last night with that girl who lent me the violin "

"Rather more than that sometimes," John demurred He was remembering what else had happened in Cracow besides his emotional experience in St Mary's Church

"You can't expect to be granted the grace of faith if you turn from it when it is offered to you "

"But suppose it be surrendering to an illusion?" John queried

"In that case you'll never know, for death will blot you out That seems to me the last objection to raise against faith Humanity has not made such a success of existence when it has refused the act of surrender All those people last night had the will to believe in Marx, but for the credibility of Marx's doctrine there is no comparable body of evidence compared with the evidence of nineteen hundred years in favour of the doctrine of Jesus Christ Every argument on behalf of Marx's theories can be matched with arguments a million times stronger on behalf of Jesus Christ's theories Christianity when practised has never once failed to work since God was Incarnate Of what else can that be said?"

"But I'm not considering even the possibility of Marx being right," said John "What I cannot escape from is the disquieting fancy perpetually gnawing at the back of my mind that man is merely a piece of mental machinery as it were which has gone wrong and is throwing out the whole balanced scheme of nature, that he is like one of those cells which upset his own bodily organism by starting

to grow or whatever they do when they ought not and produce a cancer ”

“That would apply admirably as an illustration for the results of man’s first disobedience,” observed Julius “But the Incarnation showed the way to cure that cancer ”

“Julius, Julius, I don’t require argument, I don’t require illustration,” John exclaimed “I believe that if any religion be true Christianity must be the only true religion, and if Christianity be true that the Catholic Church must be the only repository of its truth I assure you with me it is no question of refusal to believe What I dread is taking the tremendous step of a positive affirmation of faith, and then finding myself an unbeliever It is because I desire so intensely to believe that I fear to cut myself off by a premature and ill-considered affirmation of that belief I look at you and Emil I know both spring from the same interminable line of ancestors I find you able to believe in a creed which is the direct negation of all the customs, the habits, the superstitions, the traditions, the major beliefs which have made you the man Julius Stern I find Emil as equally convinced that not one little bit of what you believe can imaginably be true Yet in his very atheism he has a more positive faith than I have I accept your assertion that you do believe in all that you must believe as a Catholic, but I must equally accept Emil’s assertion that he cannot believe in any of it I must then go on to suppose that God has seen fit to reveal Himself to you and has withheld the revelation of Himself from Emil And that at present is beyond my conception of a just God On the other hand if there is a God He must be a just God, and I am driven toward the other alternative that there may not be a God at all And so long as that alternative exists in my mind, I cannot, indeed I dare not profess the affirmation which you will profess to-morrow ”

“Oh well, I didn’t mean to embark on a discussion like

this," said Julius "But I used to envy you so much when I was a boy, and you've always understood me so well that I hoped *you* would understand my conversion is itself a testimony to the truth of that to which I have been converted "

"You have certainly set me off thinking again, and perhaps when I come back here in the autumn and start thinking by myself I shall go to your *parroco* and present myself as a catechumen "

"You're writing a play about Mary Queen of Scots, aren't you?"

"I started it at Mileto, but I've put it aside until I'm back in England and can get hold of some books I want "

"All the books in the British Museum won't help you to write a play about Mary Queen of Scots unless you believe what she believed You'll only be dressing up a wax doll to amuse the public," Julius declared emphatically

Wreaths of mist tinted by the rising sun to a Correggio-like warmth of human flesh were floating round the bastions of Monte Sant'Angelo when Julius made his way up through the steep streets of the little town to the house of the Sisters of St Elizabeth in whose chapel he was to be baptized and receive his first Communion He had seen some of these 'grey nuns' in their brown habits and grey veils trotting about Citrano on their nursing duties They were dumpy wrinkled old women more like ancient family retainers than the usual nuns one saw It was a surprise to find on reaching the house where the *suori* kept a *pensione* for invalids that the sister-in-charge was a young and beautiful woman of not more than thirty Sister Franzeska was a Prussian, tall and stately with a figure that not even the rough habit was able

to spoil. She was a *baronessa*, the *parroco* whispered to Julius when they were walking through to the chapel.

"*Una donna molto valente*," he added, with relish for his favourite epithet.

Julius was a little taken aback to learn that all the sisters were to be present at his baptism, but the *parroco* assured him that the spiritual edification they would derive from that solemn occasion was more than he had the heart to deny them. Julius had a notion that the *parroco* himself was by no means loth to have an audience of his personal triumph, and with the affection he felt for the dear simple man he was able to rejoice at the extra pleasure such an audience would give him. Besides, those half-dozen old women, four of them Germans and two Italians, had devoted their lives to ministering to sick bodies with all the disagreeable service that nursing must entail. Were they not entitled to witness the restoration to health of a sick soul? Were not they who had gone trotting dutifully round from squalid house to squalid house to wash the sores of dirty old men and empty the slops of bedridden old women entitled to see outpoured the regenerative water of the font?

Although to some extent a private baptism the *parroco* did not forgo much of the ceremoniousness. He himself was vested in cope and had two of his junior clergy in attendance, one a plump young priest with eyes like a robin and the other very tall and thin with a sly glance that belied his austere form.

Question and response. Solemn exorcisms. Holy water and holy oil. Abjuration and blessed salt. White veil and lighted candle. The six old sisters clicking away at their beads. The blaze of candles and the red roses on the altar of Pentecost. The Apostles' Creed and the Paternoster recited solemnly alone before that altar. Mass and Holy Communion.

When it was all over the *parroco* took Julius by the arm and led him affectionately upstairs to the little parlour where breakfast was laid for the two of them. While they were eating Sister Franzeska came in with a bouquet of roses one of the old sisters had gathered for Julius's beautiful wife.

"You should have brought her with you, Signor Stern," she told him.

Julius replied in German that he wanted her to come of her own accord one day. Sister Franzeska flushed with pleasure at hearing her own language, and nodded her understanding of his point of view. She was like she was like? Some picture by a Flemish painter. But which? He could not remember. Strange to find this aristocratic young Prussian with her fine mouth and candid authoritative blue eyes and carnation cheeks in charge of these six withered old nuns. He asked her where the mother house was, and she told him it was at Breslau, adding that this was one of the outposts of the order. Julius was wondering what his Polish grandfather would have said if he had been told that his grandson would one day be eating an egg after Mass in a convent parlour with a Prussian sister-superior and an Abruzzese priest.

"*Be'! Sei contento, mio figlio?*" the *parroco* asked, beaming, when they rose from breakfast.

"*Contentissimo,*" Julius declared.

Sister Franzeska asked if he was not a great violinist.

"I don't play much nowadays."

"It is an inexcusable request to make, but I love music very much and hear no music now. Would you I wonder?" she broke off, her cheeks in a flame.

"You want me to play to you?"

She flushed again.

"I feel it is an imposition," she murmured.

"What do you want me to play?"

"I should like to hear some Bach "

"Then I will certainly come and play to you "

"Perhaps if I had said 'anything you like,' you would have refused?" she asked with a smile

"I should have thought twice before agreeing," Julius admitted "Have you a piano here?"

"Not even a piano," she sighed

"Do you play the piano yourself?"

"I used to play when I was in the world "

"Be'!" intervened the *parroco*, who could not understand German "I must be going about my business I will let you know which day the Archbishop arranges for your confirmation We shall have a fine drive together over to Sorrento "

"You're busy, sister?" Julius asked when the *parroco* had taken himself off

"Not for a few minutes "

"If I sent you a piano, would that be allowed?"

"Oh, but why, yes, I see no reason but I could not make such a demand upon your generosity "

"You would play upon it sometimes?"

"Indeed, yes "

Next day Julius went in to Naples and chose a cottage Bechstein which by what might fairly count as a miracle of dispatch was delivered at the house of the Sisters of St Elizabeth on the vigil of Corpus Domini

Just over two years later, after Italy had at last declared war on Germany, the arrival of that packing-case would be remembered as one of many suspicious enemy activities, and when Sister Franzeska and the four old German nuns were carted away to internment in a malaria-ridden camp of Calabria the two old Italian sisters, left destitute by their more patriotic fellow-countrymen, would see the piano sequestered with the rest of the property of the enemies of those who were fighting shoulder to shoulder in the great war for civilization

By the end of the month hardly a tourist was left in Citrano. Julius and Leonora and John, who after the feast of Corpus Domini had been saying every week that they really would be off to England at the beginning of next week, decided to have a final celebration and leave at the very latest by Thursday, the second of July. The celebration took the form of a week-end at the Marina del Cantone at the foot of the southern slope of Monte San Costanzo, which formed the high ground at the extremity of the Sorrentine peninsula. Wacey Langridge told of an old tumbledown *palazzo* on the beach inhabited by a family of fisherfolk where they could sleep for a couple of nights, and promised that Athene should for once consent to leave Arthur Gilmer to the care of his nurse and make one of the party, the sixth place in which was offered to Geoffrey Noel.

They set out on the Saturday morning, and after one more day of sea and sun on islets and in coves and at the base of mighty limestone cliffs, they dropped anchor off Cantone in a windless orange sunset. The men slept on pallets of straw in a barrack of a room used for storing anything from old fishing-nets to jars of oil. Athene and Leonora were given beds in the family bedroom which the patriarch and matriarch of the *palazzo* insisted on evacuating in their favour. After supper they wandered out and sat on the dark sand of the Marina below an olive-covered slope. A crescent moon was dipping to the west behind the black bulk of Monte San Costanzo.

"This is peace," John murmured.

Nobody had even enough energy to agree with him. They merely lolled back, listening to the lapping of the sea on the dark sand. When they got back to their sleeping-quarters they were told apologetically by their hosts what a pity it was they had not decided to come here just a fortnight ago when the feast of St Anthony had been celebrated in Nerano, the village on the ridge of the land

above the olive-groves with the finest display of fireworks ever seen, such splendid catches of anchovies had their good father St Anthony sent them to pay for his holiday. They assured their hosts that they had been enjoying a succession of festas at Citrano and that the darkness and tranquillity of Cantone were exactly what they were enjoying.

"*Aria sana! Aria fresca!*" Their Excellencies were right. After all what did human creatures require more?

In the morning Julius, John, and Geoffrey Noel walked up to hear early Mass in Nerano. The cicadas were rasping in the olive-grove with the noise of a sawmill. It was going to be another piping-hot day. Yet after breakfast notwithstanding the heat they took the rough path round the base of Monte San Costanzo, and about one o'clock they sank exhausted among the myrtles and rosemary that hid the scanty fragments of the great Temple of Minerva which once dominated this cape.

Presently John scratching idly among the stones found a small terra-cotta head of the goddess. He offered it to Athene.

"You are more like your namesake than this," he told her. "Her nose has vanished. Her cheeks are pocked by weather. But you can still see the curve of her helmet. Yes, you are much more like her than this."

Although John had spoken in jest, when he looked at Athene he suddenly realized for the first time that in very truth she did resemble an Hellenic convention. Comparable high cheekbones had their goddesses on painted vases, and comparable dark slanting eyes, and comparable long-legged grace of form. Her colouring too of sun-burnt rose made her more than ever like a figure on some vase. A swift emotion of envy of Wacey's good fortune swept through him.

"Is this actually for me?" she asked, taking the little head. "Isn't that sweet of you, John?"

For a second he seemed to be alone with her on this headland, and the trivial words she uttered to be fraught with profound significance. The impression passed rapidly as a bird across the vision at dusk or an arrow which nearly hits the mark.

The others were now scraping about in search of heads, but none of them found one that June day lying where it had been dropped, perhaps from the tray of some vendor of pious souvenirs, perhaps from the hand of a child immediately after it had been bought nearly two thousand years ago.

Noel was busy with his pencil, but with much wriggling and humming declared at last that the epigram he had composed to immortalize the occasion required polishing before he would give it to the world. John found himself absurdly anxious to know what Noel had written. After they had eaten their lunch they found a great limestone boulder in the shade of which they drowsed away a couple of hours. Then they made their way back by Termini and Nerano and came down through the olive-groves to bathe.

On Monday evening just before they embarked for the long row back to Citrano, one of the fishermen appeared from the village above with newspapers.

"Any news?" they asked.

"Nothing of any importance," he replied. "Some Austrian duke has been killed somewhere. But that's all."

John snatched the paper and read of Sarajevo in the Naples *Mattino*.

"We shall have war before the summer is finished," he exclaimed. "We must get back to England quickly."

"I was going to suggest staying on another week," said Julius.

"No, no," John insisted. "We must get back to England at once."

And as he jumped into the boat he had a sharp presentiment that this was the beginning of a much longer voyage.

than across that stretch of placid sea to Citrano where the islets of the Sirens lay under the slowly filling crescent of the moon

"*Arivederci, signori, signore Buon viaggio,*" the friendly family of Cantore called to them from the rocks "*Buon viaggio e presto ritorno!*" A good voyage and a speedy return?

The oars splashed The rowlocks squeaked and grumbled The boat moved eastward over the dusky grey water John's positiveness of prophecy had had its effect on his companions

"I guess if there is a war we'll be as well in Citrano as anywhere," Wacey decided

Athene was fluttered A threat of war on top of these days of absence from Arthur Gilmer set her off wondering if anything dreadful had happened to her small son

"Oh, they won't be so insane," Julius declaimed "We were nearer to war three years ago, and nothing came of it"

"I tell you war is certain," John repeated "I've known for months it was coming I thought the death of Francis Joseph would be the signal And this assassination of the heir is even worse"

"But if Austria fights Servia I don't see why that should affect anybody else," said Leonora

"Russia will protect Servia, and Germany can't stand by and see Russia mop up the Balkans I tell you this must mean war"

Geoffrey Noel looked grave He was thinking about that monthly remittance from his wife in Paris A war would give her another of those excuses in which she delighted to keep him trudging on hot bricks backwards and forwards between the post office and his *villino*

However, on the Piazza next day nobody seemed to have an inkling that the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had any bearing on the easy summer

life of Citrano, and when people heard of John Ogilvie's arrangements about his Tower they shook their heads over his nervous excitability

Yet John's arrangements were most practical. He entrusted Wacey Langridge with a sum of money to carry on with the building as he had planned it and gave him full authority to decide any unforeseen question that might arrive.

"I shall get my furniture shipped out at once. Fofu says he'll store it till the Torre Saracena is ready. Of course, I may be back in the autumn, but I feel in my bones I shan't be."

"Well, if you feel like that, wouldn't it be better to give up the building till you know what is going to happen?" Wacey suggested.

"No, no," said John impatiently. "I've set my heart on coming to live here, and I want things to go on so that if the war comes when the war is over I can come here at once. I know what England's like in time of war. I had some of that during the Boer War. All right if you're fighting, which of course I shall be, but no fun at all if you're a non-combatant. Besides, I mean to live here, and I want the excitement of seeing what the Tower looks like when I get back. You don't mind the job?"

"Oh, good lord, of course I don't mind it. I'll have nothing to do this fall except jog along with this book I want to write. But I bet you're dead wrong, John, and you'll be out here yourself."

"If I am, all right, but I'm leaving nothing to chance. Good-bye, Athene. Don't let Wacey change my room at the top of the Tower with any bright ideas of his own."

"Good-bye, John. You'll make me believe in a minute that we aren't going to see you again for a long time," she said.

"I don't think you are."

"Do you really mean that? Really and truly?"

He nodded, holding her hand in farewell

"Why, I think that's truly terrible I'll burst into tears on your shoulder in another moment"

And though the words were uttered lightly, though their tone seemed to mock at emotion, they made John turn quickly away

They travelled home by the St Gotthard route direct to Calais because Julius wanted to see Milan Cathedral, and John was glad to avoid Paris, having nothing done of his *Mary Queen of Scots*, and in his heart feeling disinclined to let Gabrielle know he had been staying at Citrano for two months He did not wish her to be sarcastic about Citrano

At Bâle they had to cross the German frontier in changing trains It was the merest formality of showing one's railway ticket, and on this sleepy July day the officials were so casual that it was difficult to believe the most trifling incident had happened to disquiet Europe In the restaurant car swaying and clanging northwards they were waited on by a smart German steward with fierce moustaches brushed up in the style of the Kaiser's, and for years to come John would remember the face and figure and the very gestures of that man waiting with such dexterity at those meals eaten as the train clanged on past the bloodiest battlefields history would yet have known This train crowded with chattering tourists would be remembered as a kind of *danse macabre* conducted by that trim and active steward in his tight trousers and short jacket, by a death's head sporting fair moustaches brushed up in the style of the Kaiser

"This fellow gives me gooseflesh when he hands me a drink," he told Julius at the time

"What's the matter with him?"

"I don't know He just makes me feel creepy Sergeant Death "

"I think he's rather a dear," said Leonora

In London people seemed to fancy the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had less significance for the present than the death of Mr Joseph Chamberlain Henley was just over The Varsity match was just beginning The weather was extremely fine and hot In a week or two John was wondering if after all he was an alarmist Nevertheless he had his furniture sent out to Citrano and was lucky enough to dispose of the lease of his house in Millbank almost at once

"Not the slightest likelihood of a European war," Sir Alexander declared "I believe Winston is a bit excited at the possibility of a crisis in foreign affairs, but Winston is Winston What is serious is the way the King has stepped in and summoned this Home Rule conference at Buckingham Palace A good many of us feel it is a violation of constitutional usage, and a staining of the Royal prerogative in the interest of one political party "

"Considering the weak-knee'd way in which you've allowed Carson and Bonar Law and the rest of them to go splurging round the country I don't see why you should grumble if the King takes a hand in the business," John replied

"All this talk of civil war has been disgraceful, no doubt But this is not the moment for a General Election If this conference fails as I think it must fail, it may force a General Election on us "

"Have you been reading the foreign news?"

"Yes, but I tell you I don't believe in the possibility of a European conflagration "

The Home Rule Conference broke up after four days of useless argument At the end of the previous April Carson had successfully arranged for the landing of 35,000 rifles and 3,000,000 rounds of ammunition from

Germany, which were distributed round the bigots of the Four Counties that called themselves Ulster. At the end of July 2,500 rifles and 125,000 rounds of ammunition from Germany were landed at Howth near Dublin. Thereupon two companies of the King's Own Scottish Borderers were called in to help the police do at Howth what they dared not attempt at Larne. The troops were jeered at and stoned, lost their heads and fired without orders, killing a woman and two men and wounding thirty-two. What was sauce for the goose was evidently not sauce for the gander. Europe was falling to pieces, but Mr Bonar Law and Mr Balfour were alert to make party capital out of this business, and when they and their supporters had done as much to bring about the European war as the Sarajevo assassins, the hysterical Kaiser, and the desperate diplomats of the crumbling Austrian and Russian Empires, with a noble gesture of pure patriotism the Opposition agreed to put party politics on one side and help the Government in every possible way. TO HELL WITH SERBIA screamed the posters of *John Bull* on the tail-end of the London motor-omnibuses. That was Saturday, August 1st. On Sunday somewhat tardily prayers were offered for peace in churches throughout the country. On Monday the Germans were in Luxemburg and bound for Belgium. On Tuesday when midnight had struck the country was at war. Civil war in Ireland had been averted, and if the leaders of the Opposition were not yet in office they could hope the Government would muddle the conduct of the war and make it necessary to call upon them.

"Noble fellows," commented John when he read Mr Bonar Law's speech in the House of Commons.

The sooner he could get into uniform and out of London the better. Everybody seemed to think the war would be over before Christmas, and a few did not expect it to last beyond the first rains of autumn. One or two people, chaffed as professional pessimists, declared it might last a

year Kitchener's appeal for a hundred thousand men for three years or the duration of the war suggested Kitchener himself was a bit of a pessimist. The pessimism of the private individual, however, became the prudence of a field-marshal. John discovered that Henry Falconer (now Lord Warburton) was commanding the battalion of Loamshire Territorials which the old First Volunteer Battalion had become. He wrote to ask him if there was a chance of getting taken on as a subaltern. The reply came quickly.

WARBURTON HOUSE,
STANSTEAD

August 12th

Dear Ogilvie,

I'm afraid there's not a chance of your getting back into the battalion. I'll be perfectly frank and tell you I don't want subalterns of over thirty. We're well up to strength and stand a good chance of being one of the two or three Territorial battalions that will get across the Channel this autumn. You'll do better to try for Lord K's new army. I'll write to Lord Aynsworth if you like. He's the Lord Lieutenant of Loamshire now, and would, I'm sure, recommend you for a commission. We're tremendously busy. Rose has taken on the VAD organization. She sends you messages and wishes we could ask you down to us, but there's not a moment to think of guests. The men round here are joining up splendidly. Every unmarried fellow under twenty-eight on the estate has joined K's 100,000, and I hear the same spirit exists all over the country. Let me know if you want me to write a line about you to Aynsworth.

*Yours sincerely,
Warburton*

No, he did not want a commission in any Loamshire battalion, except his own. Besides, what chance did any

of these New Army battalions stand of seeing active service?

At some theatrical party he met a woman writer who was engaged to a Staff Captain at the War Office

"Do go round and see Charlie, Mr Ogilvie," she begged

Mrs O'Hara, known to her friends as Mavourneen, was a professional Irishwoman who would as soon have lived in purgatory as in her own country. She had been a widow these twelve years and more, and had supported herself and her only daughter by writing social gossip for one woman's paper, giving advice about etiquette and the emotions in another, and reviewing novels in a third. Ethne, her daughter, was seventeen with ambitions to go on the stage and Mrs O'Hara who had been keeping Charlie Havelock of the 60th hanging around for five years had now made up her mind that Ethne was too old for her to afford to remain a widow

"Yes, do go round and see Charlie, Mr Ogilvie. He's working twelve hours a day at the War Office. And longing, just longing for a job somewhere in France, poor old darling. Ethne was so thrilled to meet you. She was wondering if there was a chance of an understudy in your next play. Dear me, how successful you have been! And how lovely it is to be successful! But then I'm Irish. And we Irish are never successful. We don't think enough about the main chance, I suppose."

Mrs O'Hara sighed, and allowed her dark-blue melting eyes to be suffused with a liquid melancholy

"I don't know what Mavourneen thinks I can do," said Captain Havelock when John looked at him across his desk in the War Office. "Do you want my advice, Ogilvie? My advice is to give up any notion of active service. We don't want jolly fellows like you to be killed, what? You can do your bit by keeping us all amused at home. Write us another play like that jolly play of yours which

had such a run at the Princess of Wales's By Jove, I went twice I loved it "

"But I want to be in on this show," John said "Who the devil wants to write plays when a real drama is running?"

"But, dash it, you artistic chaps won't be of any use to us Must speak frankly Don't think I'm being offensive You'll be nearly thirty?"

"I'll be thirty in October "

"There you are, I mean to say "

"But you're well over thirty, Havelock "

"Of course I am I'm due for my majority any day But this is my pigeon I've been waiting for this since I left Wellington in '95 It's my profession "

"I was a subaltern in the First Volunteer Battalion of the Loamshires I passed schools It wouldn't take me long to pick up my drill again "

"Everything's different now The army has been entirely reorganized Look here, Ogilvie, if I thought you'd be any good to us I'd say 'go ahead' I'd think you a damn fool, but I wouldn't stand in your way But you won't be any good You'd be a fifth wheel, what? A fly in the ointment, what?"

"Do you mean to say there's no possible chance of employing my services?"

"Not in a marching regiment, old thing Oh, I don't say you couldn't easily snaffle a commission in one of these New Army regiments that are being raised But you wouldn't like it You'd have some fly-blown old dug-out for a commanding officer, and it would mean digging trenches and route marching on Salisbury Plain You'd be bored stiff long before the war was over There's not a chance of any of them seeing active service "

"How long will the war last, do you think?"

"Ah, now you're asking something We poor devils in the War Office hope it'll last anyway a year Otherwise some of us may get landed Still, my old man has been

very good and I hope to be a G S O 3 with one of the army corps before too long. It's heartbreaking sitting here and thinking of all one's friends getting out there. But there's a good chance of the war's lasting for a while. The French have made some blunders already, and they'll make more yet."

John walked out of the War Office glumly. It was evidently not going to be quite so easy as he had expected to get into this war. He walked along toward Charing Cross to take the Hampstead Tube and opposite the entrance of the District Railway station at the bottom of Villiers Street saw a barber's shop in the window of which was a placard on which was scrawled BUSINESS AS USUAL THOUGH THERE'S A WAR ON. This was the original of that phrase 'Business as Usual' which was to be broadcast all over London until it began to sound a little too complacent after the news of the Mons retreat had been allowed to leak out. 'More Germinating Atrocities' the newsboys were yelling. John bought a paper, and reading the account of the German army on its way through Belgium felt he should go mad if he could not soon get his hands on a German. Good God, they were worse than Orangemen!

Elise had gone down to Worcestershire with David and Prudence, but his father was at home and when he got back that afternoon he was asked if he would like to join Lady Somebody-or-Other's Red Cross Unit that was going out to the help of the Serbians, as they had to be called now by special request instead of Servians.

"Red Cross, no," John snapped irritably. "That's the last thing I want to do."

"It's one way of doing your bit."

"I don't want to do my bit. What I want to do is to get out to France. I was a fool ever to come back to England. If I'd stayed in Paris I'd probably have picked up an interpreter's job on the spot. As it is there's a waiting-list

a mile long at the War Office I told the man who showed it to me that I didn't believe there were as many Englishmen in the whole world who spoke French as well as all that "

"Well, I've done my best to find you something," said Sir Alexander "But the trouble is nobody seems to know what's happening, and that makes it very difficult to advise anybody eager to be in the thick of things where to try to go "

"This inaction will drive me off my head," John declared "I'd enlist to-morrow if I thought I could get a week of active service, whatever the boredom of the training might be But I'm not going to start playing at soldiers as if it were 1900 again just for the sake of playing at soldiers "

He walked along to see Miriam Stern, who was alone again now, for Julius and Leonora had sailed back to America, owing to John's urgency, in the third week of July They had wanted Miriam to accompany them, and John had tried hard to persuade her to go, but she said that if war really was coming she preferred not to have the Atlantic between her and Emil

"You ought to have gone," he told her again this afternoon

"I'm very glad I didn't, John I hear that travelling is soon likely to become extremely difficult, and the notion of being marooned in America appals me I wish I could get a line from Emil I've had nothing from him for a fortnight "

At that moment there was a telegraph-boy's knock, and the maid came in with a telegram from Mileto to say that Emil was well but overwhelmed with work and that he would write by the next bag

"So that's all right," said John "He's lucky I used to jeer at his consular career, but he was wise He'll have plenty to occupy him I can get nothing to do "

"I don't really see why you want to do anything, John. Surely you can sit back and observe. That's the duty of an artist in these hectic days."

He shook his head.

"Surely you know me well enough to understand that if I don't somehow get into the middle of the biggest thing that has happened or is likely to happen in my lifetime I shall shrivel up."

"I'm not convinced of that. So much inspiration is really thwarted action. The mere fact of being prevented from doing anything may have a wonderful effect on your work."

"How could it have a better effect than the thrill of lived action?"

"Well, the danger of living your own action may make you impatient of stage action. I agree you might find inspiration in experience, but so much of actual experience cannot be reproduced, and there might be a danger of your sitting back and saying, 'I have lived plays. Why should I write them?'"

"What would be lost by that?" he asked. "If I discovered at the end of this war that none of it was capable of being translated into drama I should merely have proved what I have been suspecting for some time, which is that the drama is dead as a vital art form. In that case I should write no more plays, or continue to write plays merely to amuse as a profitable hobby."

"I still think the effect of thwarted action on your creative imagination might be invaluable," she insisted. "Name any dramatist that ever lived of whom it could be stated positively that the activity of his own life had enriched his plays. The clearest argument I know against the Baconian theory is that Bacon was a man of affairs whereas Shakespeare was a poor player. Do you suppose *The Tempest* would have been the better for Shakespeare's having fought on board one of Drake's ships?"

"Well, of course I could argue with you over Æschylus who fought at Salamis and wrote the *Persae* or over Sophocles who fought at Samos and wrote gloriously afterwards. However, I suppose it's rather absurd to seek for parallels in the world of to-day for that golden age of art. But, Miriam, leave art out of it. I prefer life. The thought of growing old and looking back to these days as a detached observer is horrible to me. Apart from everything else, I intensely dislike all that Germany stands for, and I want to help to smash the beastly nation."

"But other nations are just as militaristic. I think this talk about militarism is rather humbug."

"It's not the militarism I object to," John exclaimed, "it's the bureaucracy. England has a few sins to answer for, but she has one supreme virtue. She has remained an amateur. Even when she persecutes another nation like the Irish she does it in an amateurish way. Her politicians are only professionals in so far as they are paid and spend much of their time in trying to oust other politicians in the way of their being paid more, but when they exercise their parliamentary functions they are all amateurs. We have a professional bureaucracy which will menace the life of the nation if it be allowed to grow any more powerful than it is already, but a triumph over bureaucratic Germany will be a blow to our own bureaucracy. And another thing. A victory over Germany will mean Germany can break up again into small states. In fact this war ought to mean the restoration of small states all over Europe. That way lies safety for the world from those unwieldy imperialisms which overlay us all. Now, I can't sit back and preach that without having done something myself to destroy the enemy."

"But, John, you are so Protean. You are too easily capable of being transformed by your surroundings. Not in a chameleon way by taking the colour of them. That wouldn't so much matter. But you are transformed

more deeply You actually become what you are doing at any given moment That is an incalculably useful quality for a dramatist, but I dread what an active participation in this war might make you become, even temporarily "

"Nothing you can say will change my intention, my dear," said Johra. "Somehow, somewhere, I must be in the war But not digging trenches on Salisbury Plain And not in a Red Cross unit "

"I told you I'd had a cable from New York to say Julius and Leonora had arrived safely I hope Julius won't suddenly discover that the future of his music demands his being somewhere in the war He's not Protean like you, John, I don't fear for that But I cannot believe any composer has benefited by the excitement of active service "

"Julius the Apostate, as Emil calls him "

"Yes, but you know, John, he couldn't bear what Julius did I could detect a great deal of bitterness under that apparently light-hearted ridicule "

"Of course he doesn't like it I won't say it has shaken Emil's faith in atheism, but it sits by his intellectual path like a sphinx If I'd become a Catholic it would have rejoiced him as further evidence of its folly and mine But he had a respect for Julius, who's as hard as himself—mentally I mean Miriam, what do *you* think of Julius's step?"

"I think for him it's the best step he could have taken "

"No, no, that won't do It's either true or false It can't possess a relative truth "

"Are you asking me if I believe in Christianity?"

"I suppose I was," said John, with a smile

"I think you would like to believe in it, John, and I know I don't want to believe in it, but the trouble is that I often have an uneasy feeling it may be true and you have an equally uneasy feeling it may not "

"Do you think Julius really believes in it?"

"Yes, I think he really does "

"Then that's a great argument in favour of Christianity," said John "There is not the faintest tincture of intellectual dishonesty in Julius There is not the slightest sign of a weak credulity in him Well, perhaps when this war is over I shall come to some conclusion about myself Meanwhile, I've got to get into it somehow "

In Worcestershire where he went for the week-end John found a fever of patriotic deediness Blue-nosed generals who had fought as subalterns in the Crimea or the Mutiny were enrolling the lads of the village in the New Army Lady Hunter, twenty years younger since the fourth of August, was presiding over sewing-bees Elise was working for Belgian refugees David was groaning over his boyhood, but optimistic of his chances of joining the O T C at Eton before the war came to an end Prudence had become attached to some miniature form of girl guides and spent most of her time trying to persuade the maids to let her practise first aid on them

"But, Miss Prudence, please don't keep on keeping on so How can I get on with my work with my arm tied up like this and giving me pins and needles ?"

"Well, I'm stopping your wait a minute I want to see which artery it is Oh, you are a silly, Janet "

And when she wasn't bandaging the maids she was darting from shrub to shrub in the garden, blowing calls on her whistle

In this atmosphere John heard of the formation of the Royal Naval Division with the First Lord of the Admiralty's guarantee that it should see active service quickly He rushed up to London, pulled wires here and there, and managed to get accepted as a Sub-lieutenant R N V R only to be turned down in the medical examination

"But, doctor, surely an attack of pneumonia over eighteen months ago doesn't disqualify me now?"

"Sorry, old man, but we're only taking absolutely fit men. There's nothing the matter with you really, but we've too many applicants as it is."

It was in a black mood that John went down to stay with Frederick Rodney at his windmill on the outskirts of the village of Summertune in Essex. Rodney was one of several young novelists who had impressed on literary opinion during the last three or four years the fact that for better or for worse a new generation was coming along. Rodney was a few months younger than John, tall and slim with a Wellingtonian nose and a deliberately portentous manner. He had married the widow of a Victorian man of letters ten years older than himself, but having been thirty years younger than her first husband she had been accustomed to thinking of herself as very young, so that she was not painfully aware of her second husband's juniority. She had a comfortable income, and her taste for bright colours made her seem more modern than she was. Marriage with Jane Hardstaffe had been a boon to Rodney by enabling him to write what he wanted to write without having to think of royalties. Whether this was an advantage to English literature some of his critics doubted, for he had a quenchless facility for covering the octavo sheets with that smooth legible handwriting of his. John was fond of him in spite of his melancholy Dane manner and self-conscious modernity and susceptibility to the inspiration of books instead of mankind.

"Freddie is writing in the windmill," Mrs Rodney told John when he arrived. He felt that to announce Freddie was breathing would hardly have been a more superfluous statement.

The Rodneys did not live in the windmill, but in an

agreeable small modern house The windmill at the end of the garden was Freddie's curiously appropriate workshop

"But with my Tower and when shall I see that Tower again, for I will not be beaten by things like medical examinations, and somehow I'll get somewhere in this war yes, with my Tower I've no right to laugh at Freddie's windmill," John chuckled to himself as he entered the windmill and by a spiral iron flight of stairs corkscrewed his way up to the room at the top, where at a very large bare table Freddie was seated, writing away on his octavo sheets, and as John could observe in a quick glance without a single erasure or correction on any sheet in sight

"Look here, Freddie, what are you doing about the war?"

"The war?" echoed the novelist "Oh well, I suppose unless one does something I'm a special constable I watch the gasworks in Colchester two nights a week"

"But you can't go on doing that indefinitely," John protested

"Why not?"

"Don't you want to get out on active service?"

"I don't feel active service would be a particularly valuable experience for an artist"

"Why not?"

"It's too unusual and too violent What transmutation value has an attack of scarlet fever or a street accident?"

"Transmutation value?"

"Into art," said Rodney severely

"In certain circumstances both might have considerable value"

"That's because you regard life as a dramatist, and rather an old-fashioned romantic dramatist, John, I'm afraid"

John picked up the first number of a publication called

Blast bound in crude pink and produced by a vociferous group calling themselves Expressionists of the Great European Vortex

"Surely these bold lads won't have become special constables? I know Marinetti has already declared for Italy's entering the war on our side "

"The people who run *Blast* dissociate themselves from Marinetti "

"Seeing how much they've cribbed from Marinetti I suppose they'd have to "

"I believe some of them are anxious to be in the war," Rodney admitted

"You take this stuff seriously?" John asked, turning over the pages of *Blast*

"On the whole, yes. It's a bit noisy. But we have to blow up the old world "

"The war may do that before it's finished "

Rodney shook his head

"The war will be over by Christmas. We shall have forgotten about it a year from now "

"You may be right, but suppose you're wrong?"

"That's an even stronger argument against having anything to do with it. Balzac said nothing was easier to lose than the power to create. Cease to create and atrophy sets in at once. No artist could take an active part in a war and hope to produce creative work "

"If the war should last a long time and I were outside it," John declared, "that would have a paralyzing effect on my work "

"Because, as I told you, John, you regard life as a dramatist. You are bewitched by action. It seems to you more important than thought. You forget that action is always the result of good or bad thinking "

"Or of not thinking at all," John added

"When reflex, yes. Now this war is the result of bad thinking. You'll admit that?"

"To a certain extent," John assented after a momentary hesitation

"And therefore all who take part in it are an expression in action of bad thought?" Rodney went on

"Wait a minute," John interrupted "The bad thinking consisted of supposing that a dangerous situation could be averted by the rhetoric of politicians, as if a doctor could alleviate a germ by the suavity of his bedside manner It's clear the Germans planned this war if not now, within the next two years, and it was the business of our politicians to recognize that Why, at Citrano an old boy who was Chamberlain of the Court at Wurttemberg kept telling us that we English were mad not to see what was coming But that's by the way, what I want to argue with you, Freddie, is that the only way to remedy the bad thinking of our politicians is by the goodness of our action Then when we have put matters right we can deal with the politicians But people like you and me oughtn't to sit around and criticize without doing anything And we'll have still less right to criticize when it's all over "

"But I disbelieve in war," Rodney objected "I'll do nothing to help it "

"Then why the hell are you guarding the gasworks at Colchester as a special constable?"

"That's not positively helping the war "

"Yes, it is "

"Not at all It's on the same moral level as Red Cross work "

John uttered a ribald ejaculation of contempt

"I claim it is," Rodney insisted "I'm acting solely toward the end of saving human life "

"If you saw some German Guy Fawkes creeping up to the gasworks with a bomb, wouldn't you lay him out if you could? If you wouldn't you'd be a damned rotten special All right That's helping the

war just as much as blazing away at the Germans in Belgium ”

Rodney looked thoughtfully down his Wellingtonian nose

“I did it really to please Jane,” he acknowledged at last “And I like walking about at night But perhaps it does invalidate my moral attitude with regard to war We’ll find out what Rayner thinks about it He’s very anti-war You’ve never met him, have you, John ?”

Daniel Rayner was another of that group of young novelists, though more truly a poet than the others, and with the added advantage of belonging to the people, the real people, Warwickshire folk from one of the ribbon- and lace-making villages near Redworth John had read his first two novels and first volume of poems with the thrill that comes from hearing an original voice

“He’s living in a cottage about twenty miles from here We’ll drive over in the car to-morrow ”

It was the last Sunday of that fateful August, and the heat was flickering over the corncocks as Freddie drove them along the dusty lanes on their visit to the Rayners

“You know the story of the elopement ?” Mrs Rodney asked John

“Isn’t she a German ?”

“Yes, she was the wife of one of the leading doctors in Birmingham Rayner was at Birmingham University, and I believe the doctor took a fancy to him and had him a good deal to his house Anyway, Rayner fell in love with her and they eloped together There was a divorce, and now they are married She’s a jolly plump creature, from Hanover, I think Of good family I believe, and about the same age as himself ”

“Prepare for a platitude,” said John “Who could dream this afternoon that the great European war which has been haunting every year of this century has come at last ?”

Peaceful on any day this Essex countryside, but to-day in the Sabbath quiet it seemed in a drowse of peace. Yet at this moment in the Mazurian lakes of East Prussia General Hindenburg was crushing one of the wheels of the Russian steam-roller like a walnut between pincers.

"It's a comfort to think the Russians are moving on so steadily. I read in one of the papers yesterday that they are expected to reach Berlin in three weeks," said Mrs Rodney.

None of them in this somnolent countryside had heard the news published that morning by *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* of the Germans driving back 'a retreating and a broken army' in Flanders. None of them knew that there was a panic in London which had just been partially allayed by the publication of a special report by the Secretary for War assuring the public that all was well with the British Army and that the appeal for reinforcements issued by the *Daily Mail* was unnecessary. Tomorrow Mr Asquith would rise in the House and condemn in stately rhetoric the behaviour of *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* as a regrettable exception to the patriotic reticence of the Press. Immediately afterwards it would be revealed that the Press Bureau had asked for the news of the retreat to be published and that the appeal for reinforcements had been written by the head of the Press Bureau, Mr F. E. Smith himself.

John would have felt cheered up by that gloomy news. In spite of the Russian steam-roller he would have felt the war now stood a good chance of lasting well into next year with such a doughty set of muddlers in charge of it, and that therefore he might hope his refusal by the Royal Naval Division as unfit was merely a temporary set-back like any reverse that happened to either side.

The cottage which had been lent to the Rayners was a dreary little structure of crimson brick and blue slates standing in a decayed orchard overgrown with nettles.

Inside it was furnished with some striving after a pettifoggish arty picturesqueness but no attempt at all at comfort

When they arrived Rayner in an apron was on his knees scrubbing the floor of the living-room, which owing to the encroachment of the nettles on the windows and the shade of the mouldering apple-trees had the dim greenish look of an aquarium tank

Rayner rose to his feet and in a broad Midland accent told them that he was taking the chance of Sunday afternoon to give the damned place a jolly good clean up. Untying his apron, he went to the foot of a narrow staircase that led up from the sitting-room to the floor above and shouted in a brusque slightly rasping voice, an unexpected contrast to his usually soft tones which would sometimes trickle away into a musical falsetto

"Hildegarde! Hildegarde! Hildegarde! Roll off that bed and come down, d'ye hear? The Rodneys have turned up. Come on down and talk to them while I get tea"

John took an immediate liking to this frail young man whose pale face but for a stubby little reddish moustache which hardly concealed his vivid lips would have had a pierrot look. He had wavy reddish hair and exquisitely delicate white hands which he was wiping on his discarded apron

"You write plays, don't you?" he asked. "That must bring you in a bit." Then he turned again to the staircase to bawl in what seemed a fury

"Hildegarde! Hildegarde! Will you get off that bloody bed and come down and talk to the Rodneys and John Ogilvie, the play-writing chap?"

"I'm coming, Rayner, don't be in such a state of excitement," they heard in guttural accents of unvexed good nature, and presently a pair of legs in ringed stockings of black and white were seen at the head of the staircase through the flimsy balusters

A moment later Hildegarde Rayner filled the room like a genial goddess of Plenty. She was a typical figure of Germanic womanhood, dressed in a floppy dress of some light material, her fair hair inclined to collapse like a badly made stook, her white teeth glittering in a wide smile, her forget-me-not blue eyes dancing with pleasure.

"I'm so glad you've come over, Jane. I'm so glad you've come, Freddie. How d'ye do, Mr Ogilvie?" Rayner would scrub the floor, so I had to go and lie down."

There was a rolling relish about all Mrs Rayner's 'r's', but when she spoke of her husband the initial 'r' was a roll on a sidedrum.

"Sit down and talk while I get tea," Rayner commanded. He retired to the little kitchen at the back, and his wife plumped down with legs apart on a stool, bidding her guests accommodate themselves.

"We hate this cottage," she proclaimed. "But it was lent to us by the Mantons"—Manton was a soured young highbrow critic whom John had met at literary buncrashes—"and we hope to escape soon to the Welsh coast. We've drunk all the Mantons' elderberry wine, and they're angry with us. Rayner hates this place. You hate this place, don't you, Rayner?" she asked as he came in with the tea.

"Dreadful," he squeaked, but not with a mouse's squeak so much as with what might be imagined was the tenuous sound uttered by ghosts on the banks of the Styx. And in the very gestures and movements with which he went about this business of preparing tea there was a suggestion of disembodiment, of the freedom, the grace, and the featness with which one of those domestic elves of England's fairy scene must have performed their services to mortals. In his rubber-soled sandshoes he moved lightly back and forth between the kitchen and this green-shaded sitting-room, tinkling monosyllabic

comments on Hildegarde's rollicking guttural talkativeness. There was nothing in the least porcine about her full-blown buxom personality, and yet sitting there, relaxed on that low stool, in her ringed black and white stockings she conveyed the same kind of well-being as a spotted Gloucester pig conveys when extended in a sunny corner of the sty: it grunts eupeptically. After tea, John, under the influence of the weary weight of the English summer's end on a hot August afternoon and of the oppressive greenery by which the cottage was surrounded, spoke of his longing at such a season for the stark rocks and parched herbage of the South.

"But don't you miss our English trees?" Mrs Rodney asked.

"No, I find that the older I grow the less I want them," he replied. "I dislike the way they blanket with a pseudo-mystery an essentially tame landscape."

"So true," Rayner squeaked. "And so like English life."

"They're a part of the eternal English compromise," he added. "These soft sappy English trees which exclude so easily the ugly fact."

"I like the trees in Hyde Park," Rayner tinkled dreamily.

"Ah yes, because they are growing in an oasis, but you don't think an ugly suburban house is made more beautiful by planting a rowan and a laburnum in its little front garden? However, that's being extravagant because that kind of tree is quite harmless, and even pretty in a sentimental way. But elms! I think nothing fills me with a more profound nostalgia for the South than a group of elms in a corner of some field in the Thames valley, or worse a line of elms along a Midland hedgerow."

"You're right," exclaimed Rayner in dismay. "I'd never thought of it before, but those elms are dreadful. You've quite upset me, you have really. Hildegarde, it's these bloody English elms that are driving us mad."

"But you like our German trees, Rayner You like the Black Forest *You* like the Black Forest, Ogilvie?"

"I've never seen it," said John "But I had an experience of endless firs in Canada, and that was the worst experience of trees I ever had If the Black Forest's anything like that I should hate it "

"Frrreddie, you don't hate our German trrrees?" Hildegard asked eagerly

Rodney looked enigmatic He did not know one tree from another until they were made into furniture And he had long ago discovered that a striking profile cemented by silence was the most effective buttress to a reputation for wisdom

"I love the Black Forest," Jane Rodney put in "I once went there with my first husband "

When Jane Rodney mentioned her first husband it was a sign she was annoyed with her second husband about something On this occasion the annoyance had been provoked by the feeling that Freddie was not holding his own with Daniel Rayner and John Ogilvie They should not be making discoveries about elms, meaningless as she privately considered these discoveries, while Freddie was discovering nothing except his own nose She felt she should like to prod Freddie in the way a competitive mother prods her backward child at a party She was beginning to suspect Freddie's absent-mindedness Last week when they were marketing in Colchester he had put all the change in his pocket every time one of the shop-assistants laid it on the counter And the household bills were paid out of her money She made Freddie a generous allowance He should be above pocketing the change with that same expression of remoteness from things of this earth as he had assumed during this rather silly talk about trees

"I wonder when this war will finish?" she asked, flinging into the arena a topic on which Freddie as a

special constable might speak with authority in the presence of two of his contemporary strivers for fame and fortune, neither of whom had so far done anything in this national crisis

"It will be a long long war," Hildegard declared "My country is very strong Much stronger than the English imagine Somebody was saying in the village there was news this morning in London that the British army had been driven back by our army and was quite broken up "

"These wild rumours!" John scoffed

"No, this was in the *Daily Mail* "

"But it's Sunday How could it be in the *Daily Mail*?"

"A special number has been published It was Doctor Wilkinson who has heard the news," she insisted "I do not tell you this to triumph, but I am a German woman, and I cannot help feeling proud of our German soldiers "

There was an embarrassed silence In view of what they had been reading about German atrocities in Belgium it was difficult to express even a courteous approbation of German gallantry

"And it is quite wrong this English idea that we have begun the war," Hildegard went on, becoming more guttural than usual under the excitement of having to emphasize every statement "I do not say the English have led Germany into a trap, though it is very easy for Germans to think so, and with them the hypocrisy of the English is famous No, I do not quite blame the English for that But what could Germany do when Russia has mobilized to interfere for this nasty little Serbia? We must be mad to allow such a thing "

"I don't think the English are consciously hypocritical," said John, diverting the conversation to a discussion of abstract qualities "I think this proverbial hypocrisy is the self-righteousness of a people which has never been proved wrong "

"But they have been proved wrong a thousand times," exclaimed Hildegarde

"Not by the only argument an Englishman recognizes, and that is the superior strength of his adversary. It comes back to my remark about trees. It's too easy in this country to shut out ugly facts. I'll bet you, Mrs Rayner, if this rumour is true and if there really has been an official announcement that the British Expeditionary Force in Flanders is in full retreat that retreat will somehow or other be turned into one of the finest feats of arms in the annals of the British Army. One of the advantages of always believing yourself right is never to know when you're beaten. You agree with me, Rayner, don't you? You're English of the English, I believe. You belong to the very heart of England. I haven't a drop of real English blood in my veins so far as I know, and therefore look at England like a foreigner. But you "

John stopped. He had been on the point of telling Rayner that he was as English as Piers Plowman, but it had suddenly occurred to him that Rayner might resent being compared to a ploughman. He might take pleasure himself in stressing his association with the people, but he might not accept it as a compliment from somebody else. There had been just the slightest overstressed difference in the tone of his voice when earlier on that afternoon he had alluded to Hildegarde's father as Baron von Somebody-or-Other.

"No, I don't think the English are so much hypocrites as complacent fools," said Rayner.

"They *are* hypocrites, they *are* hypocrites," declared his wife.

"Shut up, Hildegarde. You don't know a damned thing about the English."

"How can I not know them?" she demanded irritably. "I have been married to two Englishmen. I think I know a huge lot about the English. My first husband was a

gross hypocrite I let me tell you," she began, addressing the company, but Rayner cut her short

"Shut up, Hildegarde," he cried, his voice rasping across the room like a skidding tyre "Who wants to hear about a first husband?"

John hoped that Mrs Rodney would make a note of this

"This bloody war has started," Rayner continued, "and the only thing we can do is to forget about it "

"What did I tell you, John?" put in Rodney, speaking for the first time in a quarter of an hour

"Is it possible to forget about it?" John queried

"Hildegarde and I are going down to this cottage on the Welsh coast," Rayner announced "And the first time she mentions the war I'll put her out of doors "

"Rayner is so violent, so fierce," Hildegarde declared with a grin of exultation

But Rayner could not be lured into any discussion about the relation of the artist to war His personal hatred of the war sufficed for him He felt so strongly that with him pure emotion acquired an intellectual quality If everybody was capable of hating the war like himself there would be no war, and as he despised anybody who was incapable of his emotion the fact that the war had been begun and was being carried on by people of inferior emotional strength to his own condemned it

When they were going, Rayner took John aside and told him that his remark about the elms had seriously upset him

"And you're right, Ogilvie Those damned elms! I'll never be able to look at them again I must get out of England I'm just a bloody elm myself so long as I remain in England "

On the spur of the moment John offered him the Torre Saracena as a refuge

"It ought to be finished by Christmas I shan't go to

Citrano till the war is over You'd find it free of elms, anyway If you decide to go let me know, and I'll give you a letter to some American friends of mine there "

"Perhaps I will," Rayner answered The rasp had left his voice It was like a far-off bell John was aware of goodwill toward himself, and as the two of them wandered along through that orchard of mouldering trees between the rank nettles he could fancy he was walking in a glow of sunlight, though the sun was already set below the gentle undulations of the landscape and here under the trees floated the first film of dusk

"A robin," said Rayner, suddenly stopping and holding up his forefinger for attention to the sharp sweet fragment of a song

"Robin Goodfellow," John found himself adding under his breath, for Rayner was as much an element of this evening at summer's end as the redbreast itself, and his match in human shape was something unimaginable out of fairyland

"Good-bye, we're bound to meet again," said Rayner

"I'm going back to London to-morrow morning "

"Not here, not here," came that sing-song "Somewhere else In Italy perhaps "

They got into the car, and the last sight of Rayner and his wife as the car turned the corner of the lane was of him standing in the dusty road waving his handkerchief like a little boy and of Hildegarde holding her skirts up to avoid the dew in the orchard and of her black-and-white-ringed stockings

Back at Windmill Cottage John was oppressed by unreality It was all so comfortable and so very well run by Jane Rodney The maids were so neat The very dogs were so well behaved Yet for Freddie Rodney Windmill Cottage and all it contained including Jane herself was just an armchair in which he found it easy to write

It occurred to John that if Freddie found an easier chair he would not hesitate to use it

"I'm resigning my job as a special," Rodney announced after dinner

"Oh, Freddie darling, why?" Jane asked "I thought you were enjoying it "

"Rayner is right It is the duty of all artists to hate this war and to do nothing which will help it in any way "

"Well, I like the Rayners very much, but I think they're both a little mad," said Jane pettishly Then her annoyance of the afternoon came back to her "You sat saying nothing, Freddie You let Rayner have it all his own way Rayner and John And even you didn't argue with him, John I think it's weak to let one man dictate to everybody in the way Rayner does "

"But there was nothing to argue about, Jane," John pointed out "He has his point of view, which, by the way, Freddie, is purely personal and has nothing whatever to do with art or artists He didn't disapprove of the war on general principles He just hates it "

"He certainly would think it would interfere with his work," Rodney insisted

"I doubt if ever in his whole life he has considered for one instant what the effect of anything would be on his work I shouldn't imagine he ever used the word work about it I should imagine he just felt he had got to write something and wrote it "

"We all think like that," said Rodney pontifically

"I question that I fancy most of us think we want to write something and indulge our inclination But it's no use arguing about that because however long we argue we shall never discover what makes men write "

But Rodney was determined to go on arguing, and if he had been silent in company that afternoon he made up for it this evening Jane Rodney grew more and more

cheerful as her husband talked, because she fancied that John who was saying very little was being worsted, and she could not help feeling elated, for like so many women much older than their husbands conjugal devotion was mixed with maternal pride. She forgave Freddie for pocketing her change the other day in Colchester. He was just as clever as Rayner after all, and a good bit cleverer than John Ogilvie. All the same, she wished he would not talk of giving up his job as a special constable. And she wished he would not repeat as his own ideas what Rayner had said about the war. Such ideas when uttered in a strong Midland accent could be excused. But Freddie was a gentleman, and people would not understand his apparent lack of patriotism. At last she grew so tired, trying to nod brightly when she thought her husband had scored a point, that she began to nod sleepily.

"Go to bed, Jane, you're tired," Freddie commanded loftily.

But when Jane had gone John told Freddie that he was not on duty as a special constable at the gasworks, and that Freddie had talked enough hot air for one evening.

Freddie smiled in a superior way.

"My poor John, what a pity you suffer from that devastating English sense of humour. Surely we've been talking seriously to-night? What is there to laugh at?"

"Nothing," said John gloomily as he poured himself out a generous whisky.

When he returned to London John resumed his efforts to get into the war, but for some time without success. He wrote to Edward Fitzgerald a plaint, mentioning his disgust at the way the Unionist leaders contrived to make party capital out of Ireland and praising John Redmond's dignified rebuke to Bonar Law. To this Fitzgerald replied.

TINORAN,
CARAGH LAKE,
KERRY

September 21st 14

Dear Judge,

I'm sorry to hear that your desire as a good Scotchman to fight for England is not being appreciated But don't bother to apologize for your pudding-faced fellow-countryman Bonar Law on Johnnie Redmond's account The British make one laugh Recruiting posters everywhere How's this for a start?

"The Allies are out to give freedom to Small Nationalities Isn't it to the interest of Ireland to aid them in the fight they are waging for Small Nationalities? They cannot then in the face of Europe give freedom to all the small nations and leave Ireland out"

Do they think they're giving freedom to Ireland by letting us clean our own sewers, and not even allowing us to do that until the war is over and the Home Rule Bill can be brought into action? Yet thousands of Irishmen have been taken in by this twaddle, and are joining up faster than the Scotch And that in spite of the damned insolence of the British authorities The National University is not allowed an O T C and it's hellish difficult for a Catholic to get a commission No colours for Irish regiments Only the Union Jack for them Not even Irish badges But Carson's Ulster Volunteers have been formed into a separate unit with their own colours and their own officers and the right to refuse Catholics admission to the ranks All ready to partition Ireland when the war is over And yet our poor fools are enlisting in thousands for the sake of the help they had long ago from France and out of pity for

The Four Winds of Love

Belgium and, I suppose, because like you they think war's a hell of an exciting business anyway Still, Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League and the Irish Labour Party have come out strong against recruiting, and I can tell you that though we're in a minority we'll give England a surprise yet I wish you were an Irishman, Judge I'd show you a grand prospect just now But it can't be talked about Nora and I would like you to come over and stay with us, but for various reasons this is not the time If you want to help England I hope you will have your wish

*Your old friend,
Fitz*

On the day Fitzgerald sent his letter Mr Winston Churchill declared at Liverpool that in this war Great Britain was enjoying the advantages of a battle in which the German Navy had been annihilated If the German ships refused to come out they would be dug out like rats in a hole About the time the First Lord of the Admiralty was speaking a German submarine left its hole for the North Sea and at six o'clock next morning torpedoed and sank the cruiser *Aboukir* Shortly afterwards it sank the *Cressy* and a couple of hours later the *Hogue* Nearly fifteen hundred British sailors were lost On the same day Madras was shelled by the German cruiser *Emden* The country did not feel so sure of the advantages it was enjoying

There was indeed a spate of talk and a cataclysm of ink during that September Mr Asquith in Dublin told Ireland that she was a small nation and as such particularly interested in the victory of the Allies The Irish Volunteers must form an Irish Army Corps Unfortunately this was exactly what the War Office was determined they should not do, and Mr Asquith's talk ended in talk Mr Lloyd George went down to Wales and asked his countrymen

to form a Welsh Army Corps. The war would not be a picnic and the Welsh were not a martial race, but, he reminded his audience at Cardiff, Cromwell's Ironsides were not a martial race. Mr Bonar Law did not consider it necessary to call on Scotland to form a Scottish Army Corps. He went to Belfast instead and pledged himself and his party to support the partition of Ireland when the war was over. Even the clergy took a hand in these wordy polemics. A body of German theologians addressed a protest to enemy Evangelical Christians against the unnameable horrors committed against peaceful Germans living abroad, whereupon a body of British theologians replied to these enemy Evangelical Christians by pointing out the unspeakable atrocities committed against Belgians by Germans. Politicians spoke as recruiting officers. Advertisements on hoardings declared to young men that their country needed them. Forward young women handed white feathers to recreant young men. And the War Office did its best to stem the rush to join up by putting every difficulty in the way of prospective recruits, and by maintaining a deep mystery about what was happening in Flanders it gradually reduced the public to something like apathy.

John exasperated by rumours and rhetoric decided to enlist and trust to the war's lasting long enough to have made the preliminary training worth while. He said nothing about the New York pneumonia this time, but he was again rejected as unfit without being able to extract the reason. In his club an interpreter who had been wounded in the foot was holding the senior members enthralled by his tales of Flanders. No such tribute to youth had been paid since the Club was founded. John cursed himself again for not having stayed in Paris and managed with the help of one of Gabrielle's friends in high places to secure himself an interpreter's job. He was sure he could have managed it since Kekewich had

managed it. An agreeable fellow, Kekewich, but a liar long before war was declared and since his experience in the Mons retreat a Munchausen of a liar. Still, even Kekewich could not have invented all of what he was narrating, and if only a twentieth were true John knew that by missing the Mons retreat he had missed one of the grand style episodes of history. And of this grand style episode those besotted mandarins of the War Office would allow no more than a few wretched alarmist rumours to reach the public they were inviting to join the colours for three years or the duration of the war. Liar Kekewich was, but so was the average politician, and the lies of Kekewich limping round from platform to platform with his swathed foot would stir the whole country if one might judge from the effect he was having on these goggling old gentlemen at the Club.

John's mind went back to old field days with the Loamshire Volunteers. They were of the same stuff and scale as these men fighting in Flanders now. Those old English county regiments. Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Malplaquet and Irishmen with them like those who broke the English line at Fontenoy, Highlanders with them like those who mended that line again at Fontenoy, alas, for it would have been better for Scotland if all those grand English regiments had been annihilated on that day and the glorious French

Austerlitz, Jena *Les voyez-vous? Les hus-*
sards! Les dragons! La Garde! Quatre Bras,
 Waterloo. Irving playing the part of the Water-
 loo veteran at the Lyceum. 'The Guards want
 powder,' says the Dook. 'And by God, the Guards shall
 have powder' and he himself could remember just
 such another veteran of Waterloo and sitting on his knee
 somewhere in the West Country long ago when his
 mother was alive. Politicians could talk. Newspapers
 could blether. Bishops could preach. Freddie Rodney
 could snuff. In Flanders they were fighting.

From the impenetrable fog with which the War Office had overcast the operations the most fantastic shapes emerged English longbowmen who had not stirred since Agincourt had risen from their graves to fight beside the riflemen of to-day This was not good enough for rumour The bowmen dead these five hundred years were magnified afresh into angelic forms who under the direction of Michael fought against the Germans as once they fought against Lucifer A draft of Seaforth Highlanders coming down from the dépôt at Fort George in Ross-shire, Gaelic speakers, became an immense army from Russia which had been transported from Archangel to Leith Everybody knew somebody who had seen the Russians One man who had seen them getting out of the train at King's Cross kept himself on free drinks for a week telling how he had recognized them as Russians by the snow on their boots

John had made up his mind to leave England and remain at Citrano until the war was over when he went to a theatrical party given by the author after a successful first night A well-known actor several years older than John, who had secured a night's leave, turned up in the uniform of what*promised to be one of his best parts, that of a trooper in the Middlesex Yeomanry, and there were two or three other people in khaki, but apart from them the party was not noticeably different from the usual theatrical party before the war The comedians were inclined to be competitively funny The lovely ladies found seats for themselves where the light became them best The clever ladies, one or two of whom were lovely as well, gave little turns sometimes with the piano sometimes without it, and as there is no audience so appreciative as an audience of theatrical folk the clever ladies were even cleverer than they were on the boards of a theatre John was thinking how strange it was that professional actors and actresses who had already done a hard evening's work should be so eager to go on per-

"Rather tough, I must admit And you say there's nothing at all the matter with you?"

"Nothing at all so far as I know "

"Did you ever do any yachting?"

"Oh, I've cruised in a friend's craft once or twice, but I couldn't claim to be a yachtsman "

"Pity this is very hush-hush of course, but the Admiralty are putting out a new type of craft to be used as submarine-chasers and on patrol work, and there's a good chance of yachtsmen getting in on rather a good thing I suppose you wouldn't consider a job in the Secret Service?"

John's heart gave a leap He felt like Aladdin after rubbing the old lamp and finding a genie at his service

"I'd like nothing better "

Then he reminded himself that Egremont was famous for offering his friends castles in Spain and was determined not to allow his hopes to be raised

"But I don't see any chance of my getting into the Secret Service "

"What languages do you know?"

"Well, I speak French fairly fluently And I know a little Italian I shouldn't be long in getting fluent in that And a little Spanish Oh, and a little modern Greek "

"I call that a pretty hot qualification "

"But I couldn't pass myself off I mean I couldn't "

Egremont laughed boisterously

"Great Scott, Ogilvie, I wasn't suggesting you'd be any use as an agent "

"A spy, you mean?"

"Agent is a more polite word No, no, I was wondering if I could get you a job with Captain Spicer "

"Who's he?"

"Very hush-hush fellow Head of the Secret Service

Look here, Ogilvie, it's bad luck when a chap as keen as you can't get a job of work in this jolly old war and I'm going to do my best to put that little matter right "

"It's awfully good of you, Egremont "

"I'll talk to my old man about it to-morrow "

"Who's your old man ?"

Egremont put a finger to his lips again

"Sorry," said John "I've not quite got the hang of this mystery business yet "

"Hullo, there's Maudie Abinger," Egremont exclaimed, looking at an actress who had been playing in London for twenty years "Wonderful the way she wears She must be all of fifty "

"No, no," said John "She may not be much over forty "

"Well, all the little angels get that butterfly in a cabinet look after they're thirty, and it's difficult to tell," said Egremont

John had no desire to talk about Maudie Abinger He wanted to talk about the Secret Service, albeit reminding himself sternly that the Secret Service was only one of Egremont's picturesque castles in Spain

"Do you really think there's a chance " he began, but the temporary lieutenant cut him short

"Discretion, old thing If I pull this job off for you, I don't want the whole of London to know I've done it I'd have half the profession writing in to join the Secret Service What I want is your address "

John was never so much surprised in his life as when a week after this meeting with Egremont, just as he was feeling in the depth of gloom because he was not with the Royal Naval Division at Antwerp, he found a letter on his plate at breakfast to say that Captain Spicer would interview him the day after to-morrow at twelve noon at 41 Adelphi Terrace

Elise asked if he was feeling seedy

"Not a bit"

"You're quite white, John You've not had any bad news?"

"Yes, you're as white as the cloth, John," Prudence exclaimed

"No, I've had what may be some rather exciting news," said John, putting the communication from Captain Spicer in his pocket He was longing to announce that there was a chance of his getting into the Secret Service, but his sense of dramatic probability saved him from supplying proof positive of his unfitness for such a job

On the morning of the appointment John took the tube from Hampstead to Charing Cross When he reached the top of Duke Street he found himself in a state of such tremendous excitement that he walked once or twice up and down John Street to recover from its eighteenth-century proportions and polite calm his own equanimity Then by way of Adam Street he turned into Adelphi Terrace, the noblest terrace in London inspired by Robert Adam's sight of Diocletian's palace in Spalato, and built to the sound of bagpipes played to cheer up the Scots labourers imported by those four canny Scots brethren for being paid a wage far below the wages of the London labourers There they had been sweated, erecting those mighty arches on which the Adelphi streets were built, until they had struck and Irish labourers, they too sweated, had taken their place David Garrick had lived here at the end of his life, and Dr Johnson's lively friend, Topham Beauclerk, whom Boswell once found poring upon the view of the Thames from the terrace and sighing because death would deprive him of both

Number 41 Adelphi Terrace was near the Adam Street corner As John rang the bell of what according to the plate on the door was some Commission for dealing with Belgian refugees, it was immediately opened by an orderly He was shown into a sitting-room on the ground-floor,

a beautifully proportioned room with a heavy ornamental plaster cornice and a fine marble overmantel. He wondered if any famous Georgian had lived in Number 41 and thought of the heavy odds that would have been laid against this house's being put to such a use in the future. After he had been waiting five minutes a tall fair man with a narrow skull in which the pale eyes were closely set came in. John looked at the three stars on his khaki sleeve.

"Captain Spicer?" he asked.

The other nodded.

"Come up to my room, will you?"

This was on the first floor at the back, the windows hung with strings of glass beads looking out on the backs of the houses on the south side of John Street. On the wall behind Captain Spicer's desk was a map of Europe dotted with little green and red flags, the latter slightly larger.

Captain Spicer asked John one or two questions about his knowledge of the world and its languages, and then noticing his eyes on the map behind him said with a half-mocking smile like that of a schoolboy in possession of something he knows will be coveted by his fellows:

"You're wondering what those flags mean?"

"I suppose the small green ones show where you have agents and the large red ones more important agents—some kind of organization, perhaps?" John guessed.

Captain Spicer's mouth opened in amazement. He put a monocle up and stared at John as if he wished to reassure himself that he really was the man he represented himself to be.

"By gad, that's smart," he exclaimed. Then he frowned. "Was Egremont talking to you about this place?"

"No, he merely mentioned your name. I didn't know your address until you wrote to me in Church Row."

Captain Spicer stroked his little moustache.

"Well, I must say it was smart guessing I think you may suit us" He lifted the telephone-receiver on his desk "Put me through, please Hullo, is that you? I think you'd better see Ogilvie all right" He put back the receiver, and spoke to John "Captain Spicer would like to have a talk with you"

"Then you're not Captain Spicer?"

The other grinned, a little triumphantly, John fancied, as if he were getting his own back after that successful guess about the flags Then he led the way along to a little handworked lift which took them to the top of the house He opened the door of a small room at the back where a pretty girl at a typewriter rose at their entrance

"I think the Chief is waiting for you," she said, and in the tone of her voice there was a suggestion, John thought, of the nurse who knows Baby is just awake and will allow him to be shown off

The pretty secretary held open the door between her room and the room beyond for John and the pseudo-Captain Spicer to reveal the presence

John saw seated at a crowded desk in a corner of what was really the attic of Number 41 Adelphi Terrace a grey-haired stocky man in the uniform of a naval captain The first thing that struck him was his unusual pallor and the next thing the small perfectly formed bow of his mouth, which was the last kind of mouth one would have expected to see between that nutcracker nose and chin

"All right, Carstairs, I'll ring you presently," said Captain Spicer "Sit down, Ogilvie"

When Carstairs had retired and the door between this sanctum and its attached office was closed, Captain Spicer sat silently regarding John for a very long minute

"I think we shall get on all right," he drawled at the end of it No, drawl was not the word The voice was more of a lazy growl "But don't think that you're going to have a hell of an exciting time with me," he went

on "All the fun for us is in peace-time Then it is fun "

"That sounds rather a paradox," said John

"Eh, what? You literary blokes use such long words "

"I mean I should have thought it was more fun in war-time "

"Not when you have to sit here and stew in an office," said Captain Spicer "I'll put you with Osborne in the Eastern Mediterranean branch We're getting a lot of stuff in from Turkey now I think the beggars are going to fight us all right You know Greek, don't you?"

"Not very much, sir But I can work on it in my spare time "

"You'd better swot up some Turkish as well Damned awful languages both of them from what I can make out, but they may be useful to you the way things are going Ever been out there? Turkey, I mean "

"I was staying with our Vice-Consul in Miletto for two or three months last spring "

"The devil you were! Stern?"

"Yes, he's an old friend of mine "

"Jew, isn't he? Yes, I thought so Well, I consider him the smartest fellow we've got in Turkey If Johnny Turk cuts up rough I hope the Foreign Office will put him as Consul on one of the Greek islands off the Asia Minor coast and let him work for me The F O have just sent that over by messenger "

He pushed across a folio sheet of blue paper stamped with the Royal arms at the head, to which was attached a slip

Dear Captain Wade,

Sir Charles Burton wants you to see the attached telegram from Vice-Consul Stern in Miletto He has noted your suggestion that in the event of war with Turkey Vice-Consul Stern should be authorized to use

any funds you desire to put at his disposal and arrange to supply you with confidential information Sir Charles tells me to say he sees no objection at the moment to this proposed course and instructions are being sent to Vice-Consul Stern that should it become necessary to leave Mileto he will proceed to Icaros as Acting Vice-Consul there on special service

Yours sincerely,
Guy Barrington

"Captain Wade?" repeated John
"That's my name, Ogilvie Hubert Mounsey Wade"
"Then who is Captain Spicer?"
"We're all Captain Spicer here when it's convenient
But read what your friend Stern says"
John picked up the folio sheet of blue paper

[Secret]

From Vice-Consul Stern,

H B M's Consulate-General, Mileto

October 6th, 1914

The Vali sent word yesterday that he wished urgently to see me this morning, and at our interview he informed me that his latest news from Constantinople indicated the determination of Enver and his friends to drag Turkey into the war in alliance with the Central Powers, and that nothing was to be gained by optimism. He spoke with much bitterness of the intrigues of the Young Turks. He said that if war came he should have to give every appearance of taking energetic action against all nationals of the Allies, but assured me that I could count upon him to do his utmost to avoid unnecessary hardships. He advised me to persuade all British subjects to leave Mileto at the earliest possible moment, but I shall say nothing until I have your instructions. Meanwhile, the repressive measures against the Greek population are

being intensified and there is reason to fear a general massacre Greek refugees from the coast and villages and from the interior are endeavouring to reach the Greek islands in increasing numbers There is much anxiety among the British residents and I shall be glad to hear from you as soon as possible what advice I am to give them

"I wish I'd stayed in Mileto now," John sighed "It sounds as if it might be rather exciting presently I met the Vali "

"Yes, I think Johnnie Turk means to fight us all right," said Captain Wade "Got any more plays coming on?"

"No, I've been too busy trying to get a job of war work to think about plays "

"I enjoyed that last piece of yours Made me laugh a lot We'll have supper at the Savoy one night soon, and you shall bring along one or two of your pretty young actresses to cheer us up "

"I will indeed, sir And is there any chance of my getting into uniform?"

"Oh yes, we'll get you made a Lieutenant in the R N V R to protect you against white feathers But, look here, Ogilvie, don't think you're going to have an exciting time here It's just a dull office grind I warn you You'll wish there was no such thing as the Secret Service before you've been working here a week You'll just be a kind of sub-editor putting together what the reporters bring in I'll send for Osborne with whom you'll be working You'll find him a very good chap but a bit slow " He picked up the telephone-receiver "Ask Lieutenant Osborne to come up to my room," he called down "We're very well fixed up here, aren't we? No houses opposite, that's what I like "

John looked out of the dormer windows in the roof across the river The sunshine was streaming in, and

away beyond the smoky haze of South London the Crystal Palace sparkled on the horizon of the Kentish high ground

"But don't think you're going to get a blood-and-thunder spy play out of your experience here," Captain Wade chuckled "At the same time don't forget it is the Secret Service and all you need tell your friends is that you're doing routine work for a department of the Foreign Office "

"I quite understand, sir "

Lieutenant Osborne came in He was a sluggish heavy-jowled young man in the late twenties with dull blue eyes John wondered why he had been chosen for this job He was to wonder still more when he got down to work with Osborne in a front room on the third floor of Number 41 where he and Osborne with the East, another R N V R Lieutenant called Hargreaves with the Centre, and two more R N V R Lieutenants called Browne-Pawson and Chorley with the West divided the Mediterranean between them like five Cæsars

Here day in day out he worked away at collecting the information sent in from consuls and agents, and at home he worked hard at Greek and Turkish Even if neither language should prove of any use to him in the war he might find them useful when the war was over and he could visit some of the many places with which he was becoming familiar in the course of collecting information about the enemy

"If there is an opening for me anywhere out in the Eastern Mediterranean on the spot, you'll give me a look in, sir?" he asked his chief one night when they were driving back to Adelphi Terrace from dinner at the Savoy

"I don't know that I will," Captain Wade lazily growled "I rather enjoy having your company round me Besides, you're too useful in the Mediterranean room Poor old Osborne means well, but his brains are

about as lively as a cowpat. However, we'll see what happens in the New Year. I think myself the war's going on for another year at least."

Alfred Blakeley, the Consul-General at Mileto, had been moved to Constantinople when his leave was up at the beginning of August, so that since the outbreak of war Emil had been carrying on as Acting Consul-General at Mileto, with all the responsibility this entailed during those critical months before the military leaders of Turkey had succeeded in precipitating their country into the general upheaval. Like all other consuls in the Eastern Mediterranean he had been instructed by telegram from the Foreign Office to keep a look out for the battle cruiser *Goeben* and the light cruiser *Breslau* which had succeeded in giving the slip to the Anglo-French naval forces and to prevent their coaling if possible. Everybody in the Mediterranean except those in a position to stop the German ships felt sure they would make all speed for the Dardanelles, and when Constantinople was successfully reached a myopic diplomacy carried on where a myopic Admiralty left off.

"An ultimatum to the Porte now," Emil observed to Mr Withers, the head clerk at the Consulate, "would either bring the Turks to heel or make it easy to render them innocuous for the rest of the war if they were foolish enough to declare openly on the side of the Germans."

Mr Withers grinned sardonically at the papers on his desk, but did not speak. He had outlived by many years any belief he may ever have held in the ability of the Foreign Office to handle a situation with common sense let alone political sagacity.

Early in September it was announced that the Capitulations would be abolished and that the right of the Christian Powers to govern their own nationals would cease as from October 1st.

John Biddulph, the patriarch of the Biddulph clan, called for his carriage and drove down from Calamana to the British Consulate. A shiver of apprehension ran through the British, French, and Russian colonies in Mileto. Nobody could recall seeing John Biddulph drive down from the cool airs and orchards and sweet fountains of Calamana to the dust and heat of Mileto on a September day. No incident could have impressed so sharply on their minds the gravity of the crisis that seemed now to be fast involving themselves.

John Biddulph was the fourth patriarch in direct succession of the great house of Biddulph which before the end of the eighteenth century had already established itself as supreme in the commerce of the Levant. There were Biddulphs in Constantinople, Biddulphs in Alexandria, and Biddulphs in Smyrna, but all these owed allegiance to the ruling merchant prince, John Biddulph of Mileto, fourth of the name, whose villa at Calamana would have competed with wonders of the ancient world like the Heræum of Samos or the Colossus of Rhodes. In the course of over a hundred and twenty years some of the descendants of the earlier patriarchs, all of whom had been exceedingly prolific, knew many vicissitudes. There were Herberts and Huberts, Alfreds and Alberts, Walters, Williams, Henrys and many another name beside, some of whom were prosperous, some of whom were less prosperous, and a few of whom were even definitely poor, but whatever their fortunes or their positions none had ventured to call any son of his John. That was reserved for the eldest son of the ruling patriarch. There were clever Biddulphs and stupid Biddulphs, honest Biddulphs and not such honest Biddulphs, Biddulphs who had married the daughters of Greeks or Levantines that were not British, Biddulphs who had maintained the purity of the English strain by going for their wives to England itself. There were Biddulphs that were interested in the carpet

trade, Biddulphs that owned trading steamers, Biddulphs that grew licorice, Biddulphs that ran shipping agencies, Biddulphs that looked at nothing below banking. Though some Biddulphs had married Greek wives a tug of war was the result of Biddulph meeting Greek. The prosperity of the main branch of the family had been secured first and preserved and developed ever since by friendship with the Turks. During the Napoleonic wars, during the Greek War of Independence, throughout the Crimean War, and Russian-Turkish war of the 'seventies, during the Græco-Turkish war of 1897, and during the recent Turkish-Italian and Balkan wars the main branch of the house of Biddulph had stood by Turkey. There had always been a John Biddulph able to obtain the ears of those in power in Turkey and willing to use on their behalf all the influence he possessed in Downing Street. It was probably a Biddulph who first laid down as an axiom that the Turk was a gentleman, for such had ever been their pleasant and profitable experience of doing business with him.

When the Young Turks had made their revolution the Biddulphs had done nothing to irritate the Committee of Union and Progress, but senior Biddulphs sitting beside the fountains in their perfumed gardens with none but the moon to overhear their converse agreed with one another that revolutionary modernity was the last thing that was wanted in Turkey. John Biddulph sent to the Foreign Office pages of confidential observations on the state of affairs for the Permanent Under-Secretary's judicious assimilation. The burden of them all was the necessity to raise British diplomatic prestige which was being more and more successfully undermined by the Germans. The wisest course would be to support the Old Turks against upstarts like Enver Bey, or if that, for reasons he might not appreciate, seemed to Sir Charles Burton ill-advised it was vital to impress Enver and his associates with the

might of Great Britain and the certainty that such might would be ruthlessly used

Perhaps Sir Charles Burton agreed with every opinion John Biddulph expressed. Perhaps he agreed with none of them. But whether he agreed or disagreed he knew that the safest road for a bureaucrat or politician to follow in the foreign affairs of Europe during the second decade of the twentieth century was the road that apparently led nowhere. The only mistake was that in this case nowhere happened to be a yawning abyss.

"Have you communicated to the Foreign Office the grave effect here of this announcement about the abolition of the Capitulations?" John Biddulph asked the Acting Consul-General in Mileto on that blazing September morning.

"I have telegraphed," Emil replied. "But I imagine the Foreign Office does not require any telegram from Mileto to understand that."

John Biddulph mopped his forehead with a great silk bandana handkerchief. He was a man of sixty-five with white hair, a yellowish grizzled beard and jet-black tufted eyebrows, and a ruddy countenance. When his hair was still jet-black and his beard golden he had been nicknamed Old Rainbow, and he became the nickname better than ever nowadays.

"It's merely a question now of when," he said.

"I quite agree."

"Rewfiz dined with me last night. He told me that he is always expecting to be summoned to Constantinople."

"I should imagine he must be feeling nervous. I hear Enver has a personal dislike for him," Emil said.

"For that reason he dare not appear to show the slightest favour to our people. But he has given me his word that should war come—oh, what's the use of talking like this?—when war comes he will do all in his power to help us. He is popular here, and he will

make it his business to make himself popular with the military. More troops arrived yesterday."

"I know."

"My eldest son wants me to leave now, Mr Stern."

Emil could not avoid a fleeting grimace. If John Biddulph left Mileto now it would create a panic among British subjects. John Biddulph junior might remain, but that would do nothing to reassure people.

"I see you don't like the idea," the merchant prince continued. "I don't like it myself. At the same time I'm not sure it wouldn't be a good thing to get people moving. When war comes it will come suddenly, and you know what the Turk is like in an emergency. As obstinate as a mule. They may start interning us within a few hours. Rewfiz would be put in an embarrassing position, because if he opposed Constantinople he might find himself in a tight corner. And I think it's vital to our interests that Rewfiz Bey should remain Vali."

"You mean vital to *your* interests, Mr Biddulph," Emil observed coldly.

The merchant prince blew as loud a blast upon his huge beak as Roland on his olifant at Roncesvalles.

"Eh, what? You're not suggesting I'm putting the Biddulph interests before the general good of the British community in Mileto?"

"Not at all," Emil replied. "I'm suggesting that Rewfiz Bey has given you his word to pay personal and particular attention to the Biddulph interests. No criticism of such an arrangement was implied. On consideration I'm inclined to think that after all it might be a good move if you did leave Mileto now. And I shall do my best to persuade all British subjects to send their women and children away as soon as possible, citing you as an example of prudence."

John Biddulph frowned. He was not in the habit of being spoken to with such frankness by Vice-Consuls.

Vice-Consuls were usually anxious for his goodwill under the belief that he had a pull at the Foreign Office. This fellow was a Jew. And a Jew was as bad as a Greek. That was the worst of this kind of crisis. Everything was turned topsy-turvy.

"If I leave Mileto I shall go to London," John Biddulph announced. "And of course they will want to have a talk with me at the Foreign Office."

"I've no doubt they will," the Vice-Consul agreed, apparently completely indifferent to any questions that might be asked there of John Biddulph about his ability as Acting Consul-General of Mileto.

"I shall hope to mention the excellent way in which you have handled the Consulate since Blakeley went to Constantinople," the merchant prince announced.

"Don't bother about testimonials to me, Mr Biddulph," said Emil coldly. "I am not remaining in the Service after the war."

So John Biddulph left Mileto in his yacht *Hera*, taking with him two or three Biddulph wives of favoured cousins and about a dozen Biddulph children.

"I shall leave the yacht at Naples," he proclaimed.

All through that September the British subjects at Emil's earnest advice were quitting Mileto as opportunity in the shape of Greek or Italian steamers presented itself. But all through September Greek refugees from the villages inland which had been flooded with Mohammedan immigrants from Macedonia were flocking into Mileto. Fortunately the weather grew much cooler and no epidemic broke out.

Early in October German engineer officers arrived to superintend the necessary repairs to the forts that commanded the entrance to the harbour. And then suddenly without any declaration of war the Turkish fleet bombarded Odessa and 2,000 Bedouin crossed into the Sinai.

Peninsula with the object of attacking the defences of the Suez canal

Emil telegraphed to know if Great Britain was at war with the Porte. He received no reply.

On November 2nd Rewfiz Bey informed him that the Ambassadors of the Allies had left Constantinople, and urged him to leave Mileto at once.

"But I've received no information that a state of war exists," said Emil.

The Vali threw up his hands.

"This is no moment for etiquette, *mon cher ami*. I have just given orders to seize all British merchant vessels in the harbour and intern their crews."

"I must formally protest, Excellency."

"I shall make a note of your formal protest, Monsieur le Vice-Consul. But as a friend, I beg you to avail yourself of that Italian steamer, which is proceeding, I understand, to-morrow morning to the island of Rhodes."

Emil had given up his house above the town half-way through September and since then had been living at the Consulate with Withers whom he now found decyphering a telegram from London instructing him to hand over the Consulate-General to the charge of the Italian Consul and proceed at the earliest possible moment to the island of Icaros as Acting Vice-Consul.

"Our orders at last," he observed.

"And bloody well about time," said Withers.

Emil looked in surprise at the sharp-nosed walnut-brown face of the Consulate clerk. He had never before heard him so emphatic.

"You're not getting nervy, are you, Withers?"

"No, but I was getting fed up. Makes anyone feel a bit of a fool when first the French Consul and then the Russian Consul and then the Belgian Consul and then about half a dozen more of the dear colleagues come in and

ask what London says about the situation and all I can answer is 'Londres n'a dit rien ' "

Withers was remarkable He could speak with equal fluency Turkish, Greek, French, German, Italian, and Russian, and all of them with a Cockney accent

"Well, we're the last of the enemy consulates left," said Emil "But there are still quite a few British subjects here "

"And they've entirely their silly selves to thank for it," Withers snapped "Nobody could have done more than you or me to get a move on them since Old Rainbow slung his hook last month "

"I don't like leaving them "

"You can't *make* them go "

"Why is Henry Peterman staying?"

"I suppose because John Biddulph has made it worth his while "

"I rather think that "

"I know it "

"All right, Withers, we'll get our stuff down to the *Principessa Elena* I've spoken to the Captain I've protested formally about the seizure of our merchant ships "

Withers grinned sardonically, and went back to the task of packing and destroying papers

Emil walked up through the town to call on Peterman in his pleasant house not far from where he had lived himself, and where John Ogilvie had so much enjoyed idling in that Omar Khayyam garden

If Withers spoke all languages with a Cockney accent Henry Peterman spoke every language including English with a tinny Levantine accent Some said Peterman's grandfather had come to Mileto from Liverpool, others declared it was from Hamburg Anyway, he had founded a small clan all of whom claimed British passports Henry Peterman was single and lived with a Greek housekeeper He was a man of about forty, tall and loose-limbed with a

drooping ragged dark moustache and cadaverous eyes, who occupied some position never clearly defined in the multifarious business activities of John Biddulph. When Emil reached his house he came to open the door himself.

"You ought to get away as quickly as possible, Stern," he said. "Dat's one sure ting."

Oddly, Peterman could not pronounce 'th' in English, although he could manage it perfectly well in Greek.

"Why aren't you going yourself?"

Peterman shrugged his great hunched shoulders, calling to his housekeeper for coffee.

"And mastika?" he asked.

Emil nodded. Peterman poured out the clear white liquid which when water was added became turbid and opalescent.

"I'm just beginning to feel a bit tired," he admitted.

"I'm not surprised. You've been working like a Hottentot," Peterman said.

"Do Hottentots work hard?"

"I don't know, and — it, I don't care, if it comes to dat."

"Why aren't you leaving Mileto, Peterman?"

"Dat's my affair, I reckon. All the rest of de family has gone. My brudder George has gone. And his two boys have gone. I told dem dey ought to go into Kit-chener's Army. Do dem good. Dey're bese dam fat and lazy."

"You're looking after Biddulph's interests, aren't you?"

"I might be," Peterman allowed cautiously.

Emil looked round.

"Can anybody overhear what we're saying in here?"

"Not when de coffee comes in," said Peterman. "Dere's only Marika in de house, and I'll send her out after she brings in de coffee."

So when the coffee came he told the plump Marika to go down to the town and buy him some cigarettes

"Now we're all alone"

"Peterman, if you stay here on your own account looking after Biddulph's interests, you've got to look after your country's interests too," said Emil earnestly

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean we shall want a centre for information from Turkey"

"You mean you want me to be a spy?"

"I didn't say that I want you to organize a clearing centre I'm going to Icaros I want to be sure of keeping in touch with you As the war goes on it's bound to be more difficult to get the stuff out of Constantinople except by a roundabout route I've arranged with some friends there to send their stuff to Panderma and with the friend at Panderma to send it to you Take this half piece of paper The man who brings the piece of paper which fits this is the man with whom you will make the necessary arrangements Your job will be to get the stuff from here along the coast to " Emil took a map from his pocket and pointed out various places

"But look here, Stern, you've taken a lot for granted Suppose I say I won't"

"Well, there are a lot of reasons against that, Peterman, if you want to do the best by Biddulph But after all the only real reason why I took such a lot for granted was that you are an Englishman and that you can be of use to your country"

Peterman drummed on the table with his knotted fingers

"But Rewfiz " he began

"I don't think the Vali will suspect you are doing anything except looking after Biddulph's interests, Peterman In fact I feel sure he won't"

"Damn it, you know, you're pretty well forcing me into dis business whedder I like it or not"

"I'm not forcing you in any way, Peterman I'm simply giving you a chance to feel you can stay in Mileto with a clear conscience"

"But what if dey catch me out? You know what Johnnie Turk is like when he's really stirred up"

"They won't catch you out Nobody has succeeded in catching you out yet You have a first-class cover Everybody knows you're here looking after Biddulph's various affairs We both know Biddulph has oiled matters well for you in advance, and who is going to suspect your messengers even if your messengers are caught? The stuff will go by mail from Constantinople to Panderma The censor of posts won't bother about internal correspondence, and in any case the stuff will be written in invisible ink The Panderma friend can either post to you or send by messenger as you arrange As soon as I get to Icaros I'll arrange for a boat and a messenger service between you and me The whole business is perfectly easy, and as I say you'll be very grateful to me for giving you this chance"

"Yes, I'll be damned grateful if I get stuck up against a wall early one morning"

"If that happens," Emil said, "you'll be a much bigger fool than I think you are Well, if you won't take on the job, say so I've got another fellow in view He'll serve my"

"Harbord, I suppose," Peterman broke in "Well, I know why Harbord wouldn't leave He tinks he's going to cash in on smuggling, and he's working some dirty business with Tom Biddulph" Tom Biddulph was the black sheep of the clan "Tom's gone over to Attens, but he can't trust Harbord any more dan Harbord can trust him Dey're a dirty pair of tieves, both of dem Yes, and if you tink you can trust Harbord"

"Don't get excited, Peterman, I know you're going to take on this job Harbord doesn't come into it"

"Well, I suppose I got to do my bit like everybody else All right, Stern I'll do my best for de old country "

As Emil was walking back from Peterman's house he met a dejected gang of men trudging along with hold-alls over their shoulders, escorted by a dozen Turkish soldiers in their coarse khaki and convicts' headgear At sight of him one of the men regardless of what the escort might do broke out of the ranks

"Here, what's the game, guv'nor, with these bleedin' Turks? You're the bleedin' Consul, ain't you? Are you going to stand by and see us poor b——rs of British seamen shanghaied by these foreign barstuds? What's the game, that's what I'm arsting "

Emil courteously sought of the officer in command permission to speak to the men for a moment The officer halted the procession, and Emil spoke

"I'm sorry I've been able to do nothing for you fellows War has been declared, and the Turks are within their rights in seizing your ships and interning the crews I have protested, but it would be raising your hopes unfairly if I were to pretend my protest is likely to have any effect I'm sending full details back to London, but I'm doubtful if anything can be done It's the fortune of war We can only hope you won't be here for very long I believe you'll be treated as decently as possible I expect the owners will do the right thing by your families "

"Yes, I don't think," a little runt of a stoker squeaked "I reckon all sweethearts and wives can turn whores before the bloody owners do anything "

It was only by a great effort of will that Emil abstained from replying

"You're right And if you'll remember that when the war is over we shall change things "

But what he forced himself to say was

'You can rely on me to press your case Good-bye, men, I'm sorry about this "

The train of men passed on toward the internment camp. Emil who was one of the few that believed the war must go on for at least another two years pitied them for the misery they must inevitably suffer. But not even he supposed their misery would last for over four years and that conditions would so deteriorate under the strain of the Allied blockade that more than half the men would die of want and never again see Southampton or Cardiff or the green hills of the Clyde. Fifty men and more swept out of the life with which they were familiar as completely as if they were dead. Fifty men and more who had sailed into the harbour of Mileto a day or two ago, who had performed all the petty duties of arrival in a new port and conformed with all the petty regulations of normal conditions, and then because they could not be warned of the risk they ran seized like this and marched away to internment. A month ago the Admiralty should have warned mercantile shipping against entering any Turkish port. Each of these men with his own worries and perplexities. Some with wives and families dependent on them. Some with girls they had promised to marry and perhaps got in the family way. Some with old parents, or instalments to pay every month on furniture, or insurance premiums to keep up. Each now that he was up against a world at war more conscious of his individuality than ever previously and each less capable of expressing that individuality than ever previously. Would not that bitter paradox affect hundreds of humble millions before the war ended, so that they who survived would emerge from it determined never to allow this ultimate exploitation of themselves to be repeated?

Emil smiled grimly to himself. He was thinking of his own ultimate exploitation of Peterman. Nevertheless that was justifiable. Peterman was a free agent. He had chosen to remain in Mileto for his own profit. And anyway there was not the least danger of his getting into trouble so long

as Rewfiz Bey was Vali Should the enemies of Rewfiz be successful in eliminating him from the political scene Peterman would always be able to make his own get-away

At the Consulate Withers was getting jumpy

"There's been a message from the Vali to say he'd rather we got on board the *Principessa Elena* to-night And I think myself it would be just as well We can do no more here Oh, and he's offered an escort for the boxes and trunks You never know with these Turks what they'll do when they get worked up Condo was in just now, half-blubbering because there's been trouble in one of the villages along the coast and about twenty Greeks were mopped up this morning He thinks he'll be next "

Condo came in the office at this moment He was the Greek assistant of Withers Constantine Condochristopoulos was his full name which had long been mercifully abbreviated to Condo He was a small man with a sort of birdlike plumpness and, except for about two hours after shaving, with a perpetually unpreened appearance All the summer he wore a grubby brown holland suit, which he exchanged in winter for a much-stained and shiny suit of black broadcloth He had just donned this now in readiness for the voyage, and his olivine skin was greasier than ever with agitation

"Cheer up, Condo," said Emil "I'm not going to leave you behind "

Condo crossed himself

"Oh, my God, Kyrie Stern, don't say such words I am vomiting two, three, four times perhaps every hour I can't keep anything in my stomach And my kidneys, Kyrie, oh, my God, my kidneys! If I am not vomiting I must be watering I have watered now fourteen times since three hours "

"It's true, it's true, Kyrie Stern," a very tall fat man rushed into the office to cry in a ludicrous falsetto It was Miltiades Vampas, the harbour doctor, whose business it

was to give pratique to entering ships "It's true, Kyrie Stern The kidneys of poor Mr Condochristopoulos are in a bad state, and I fear now for his bowels "

"Now what do *you* want, Dr Vampas?" asked Emil, who knew this concern over Condo's health must have an ulterior motive

"I want, please, to accompany you with my wife and six unfortunate daughters If we are abandoned here the Turks will murder me, rape my wife, and carry my daughters into harems perhaps as far as Angora "

"But you occupy an official position with the Turkish Government "

The doctor's flabby face was screwed up like a baby's on the verge of tears The contrast between the downturned underlip and the black waxed moustache was comic

"My official position is gone, Kyrie! What ships will come to Mileto now that the glorious Allies have declared a righteous war on these dogs of Turks, whom may almighty and merciful God burn in hell for all eternity?"

"Dr Vampas, I'm sorry to sound unsympathetic, but you must remember I have my own nationals to look after I cannot undertake the responsibility of moving you and your family "

"Oh, let him come, Kyrie," Condo put in

"But his own consul," Emil began

Condo in spite of the recent strain on his bodily moisture had enough in him left to spit contemptuously

"What can the Greek consul do? Nothing Dr Vampas is afraid for his life "

The Doctor let out a wail, and falling upon his knees raised his clasped hands in a despairing appeal to the British Vice-Consul

"The two sisters of my mother were carried away by the Turks Do not let my six unhappy daughters be exposed to such a fate Let them come with you, Kyrie,

and the family of the miserable Dr Vampas will bless your name until their dying day "

"But is there room on the *Principessa Elena*?"

"We require nothing but the space in which we stand," declared the doctor

"And is the Captain willing to take you?"

"If you will permit it, Kyrie Our fate is in your hands"

The Greek doctor slithered across the office on his knees to seize Emil's fateful hand and kiss it

"So far as I'm concerned there's no objection to your travelling on the *Principessa Elena* She goes on to Scarpanto and Rhodes after she leaves me at Icaros I don't suppose the Italians will allow you to land there "

"We shall be happy in Icaros till we can make our way to the Piræus, and in Athens I shall certainly find help with the Refugee Commission And now if you will most kindly excuse me, Kyrie Stern, I will go and give the good news to my unhappy family who are weeping together until I return "

Dr Miltiades Vampas rose to his full six feet two inches and tripped delicately away with that effeminate yet dignified gait of his, so familiar on the quayside when the world was at peace and when as medical officer of the port he was a man of consequence in Mileto

"If he cut off his moustache and dressed himself as a woman I reckon the Turks would carry him off to the interior before any of those daughters of his," Withers observed "When I was a clerk in a London shipping-office twenty years back there was a saying 'What ho, she bumps!' and I never see Vampas but what that comes into my head "

"Withers, I don't want to be personal," said Emil, "but you've been more communicative to-day than I've ever known you during the whole of my time *en poste* "

"Well, I'm a bit excited, Mr Stern, and that's a fact "

By dusk the whole of the baggage was safely aboard the *Principessa Elena*. Then Withers and Emil walked round to the Italian Consulate and handed over the keys. The Italian Consul expressed his opinion that before long he would be handing over the keys of the British Consulate-General and of his own Consulate to their Spanish or Dutch colleague. Italy would not keep out of the war much longer.

"Allora ci rivedremo fra poco. Alla vittoria, e buon viaggio!"

They had decided to dine at Panayotti's, the little restaurant on the quay where one could eat cockles that not even the renowned cockles of Mytilene surpassed.

Usually at this hour the restaurant was crammed with chattering guests, to which was added the bustle of the quayside. This evening there was hardly anybody there except themselves, and the commander of the Turkish garrison had ordered all the lights in and round the harbour to be extinguished for fear of an Allied air-raid, which was about as likely as an air-raid by the Archangel Michael and his celestial host.

"I'm sorry to leave Mileto in many ways," said Emil, when he had finished off his plate of cockles, and picked up the bill of fare on which the names of the various dishes were scabbled in pale violet ink.

"Kid chop for me, I think."

"Same here," Withers said.

"Yes, I've enjoyed my time here. But I wish I'd been able to get on a bit better with my excavations."

"Your how much?"

"Didn't you ever go out and see my excavations? Digging among the foundations of the ancient city ten miles inland now."

Withers shook his head.

"The only excavation I ever liked the look of was the excavation I made in the mattress of my own bed."

"What made you come to Mileto?"

"Drifted out here Came as supercargo of a ship trading with the Port of London and got mixed up with a girl Thought I'd like to stay There was another fellow thought he'd like to go home, and he arranged it with the old man Got a dose from the woman, and that turned me against women Had a knack of languages, and Mr Meyrick, who was Consul-General then, took me on as clerk That was eighteen years ago "

They ate their kid chops in silence, washing them down with a roughish dark wine

"This is Samian," said Emil, pursing his lips

"They ought to muzzle the bottles," Withers commented "I thought a cockle had a hold of my tongue the first sip I took "

"The old Greeks had a high opinion of Samian wine "

"I expect the old Greeks put it across people just like the Greeks of to-day "

"Perhaps we'll find a more mellow brand on Icaros Were you ever there?"

"Yes, I've been there once or twice Dead-and-alive hole Icaros is "

"We'll have plenty to do "

"I'll lay a drachma "

Panayotti, the proprietor of the little restaurant, wiped a tear away with his apron when he bade them farewell Then after a quick glance over his shoulder he muttered that Venizelos would soon have Hellas fighting beside the British and the French and that the day would come when the water of the harbour would be red with Turkish blood King Constantine would march into Constantinople Smyrna and Mileto would be free Long live the Entente !

"He'll go to sleep and dream he's God next," said Withers as they walked along to the steamer's boat waiting for them by the steps

A Turkish patrol passed, and the non-commissioned

officer demanded their permits, which were examined by the light of a lantern. As the non-commissioned officer was completely illiterate the examination did not carry his knowledge any further, and he seemed inclined to put them under arrest when one of his own men explained who they were. Thereupon the non-commissioned officer saluted and they stepped down into the waiting boat.

The *Principessa Elena* had six cabins opening out of the small saloon, in which by the light of the badly trimmed oil-lamp an unshaven Milanese bagman was yawning over the pictures of battles in a crudely coloured newspaper supplement. Withers retired to his bunk. Emil, not fancying the company of the bagman, went on deck to take a stroll before turning in himself. There was no sign of Dr Vampas or his wife or his six daughters.

About eleven o'clock, having ascertained the steamer would sail as soon as possible after sunrise, Emil went below. Stooping to get at his valise he touched a human body and leapt back in angry alarm.

"Kyrie Stern! Kyrie Stern! It's Doctor Miltiades Vampas," he heard a voice whisper hoarsely.

"What are you doing in my cabin?"

"I am very sorry to intrude like this."

"Come out at once!"

"Certainly, Kyrie Stern."

The doctor hauled himself from underneath the bunk and at last with many a grunt to his feet. He seemed gigantic in the little cabin by the light of the solitary candle which threw his larger shadow on the bulkhead.

"There was no intention to intrude, but I was overcome by a sudden horror of being taken back to Mileto by the Turks, and as I felt convinced that your cabin would be sacred even to those defiling infidels I presumed on your good nature by hiding myself there. My wife and my two youngest daughters are in one cabin, and my other four daughters are in another. There was no room for

me, and when I saw the soldiers patrolling the quay I lost my courage. I put myself at first with Kyrios Condoropoulos, but he is in such a nervous state that my nerves were not strong enough to tolerate his company, and I felt happier under your bunk. I removed all your valises to the upper berth with the greatest care before I retired underneath. However, now that you have come on board I will retire to the saloon. Your presence has given me courage. Good night, Kyrie. I apologize humbly for the intrusion. At what hour do we sail?"

"At sunrise."

"God be thanked!" the doctor exhaled devoutly.

The sun like a great topaz had risen above Asia when the *Principessa Elena*, the red, white and green tricolour at her stern drooping in the windless dream of that November morning, glided slowly between the fortified islet at the mouth of the harbour and the fortified headland south of it. The khaki figures round the guns, which were gaping like carp, bustled about hither and thither, meaningless seeming as the miniature drama of an automatic machine set in motion by a penny, their activity contrasting with the lassitude of the now idle harbour. The huddled white houses, the minarets and cypresses, the castellated walls, the empty villas of the merchants of Calamana embowered in orchards and gardens, all that was Mileto gradually disappeared from view as the steamer passed behind the olive-wooded cliffs that bounded the southerly shores of the widening Gulf, across which an ancient Turkish gunboat was laying mines, no doubt at the instance of the German officers who had lately arrived.

The steamer now altered her course and steamed in a northerly direction past a cluster of small uninhabited islands toward the great peaks of Icaros thirty miles away.

And thirty miles away to the west Patmos was coloured by the yellow morning sunlight. Three hours later the *Principessa Elena* was gliding over the peacock-dark waters of the strait between Icaros and that wooded promontory of Mycale where on the same day as Plataea Greece defeated Persia by land and sea. Emil leaning over the rail considered with what ease a boat might cross from Icaros to the mainland. He would always have the excuse of the remains of the ancient city of Icaros to find himself on that convenient part of the island shore. The steamer rounded the north-easterly point of the island and dropped anchor in the harbour of Chorn. There was not much shipping, and the uncertainty of war was already noticeable in the emptiness of the quay.

Emil's first step on arrival was to leave Withers and Condo to confer with the consular agent, a local man, with a view to obtaining a suitable site for the temporary Vice-Consulate, while he himself went off to call on the Nomarch above whose house, like a Riviera villa in its palm-crowded garden, floated the light blue-and-white flag of Hellas. The Nomarch, an ardent Venizelist, was delighted to find his governorship of the lately annexed island of Icaros was to be recognized by something more important than a British Consular Agency and told Emil that any house in the town was his for the asking. If it were already occupied he would take steps to see that the occupants moved out of it at once.

However, the new Vice-Consul did not have to cause the slightest inconvenience to anybody. Michael Psychas, the amiable merchant, who like his father and grandfather before him had been acting as consular agent for Great Britain, put at Emil's service a delightful house of his own just above the quay and what is more presented him with an escutcheon painted a hundred years ago for some British consul in one of the Cyclades, the curiously elongated lion and unicorn supporting which were like an

illustration from *Alice Through the Looking Glass* That escutcheon was to symbolize for Emil the mad world which was to make of Aegean coasts He would not allow it to be fixed up outside the Vice-Consulate lest weather should damage this survival of the days when Lord Elgin was packing up the marbles of the Parthenon He had it fixed on the wall of his office, a whitewashed room with a high vaulted ceiling There it hung with the effect of some mad caricature of a familiar object that one sees in an interior of Matisse

"That lion and unicorn will give me a chicken's neck before I've finished on Icaros," said Withers one day "They're like looking at one's face in the outside of a spoon"

"We see the whole of life in the outside of a spoon in these days," Emil told him

It was indeed a fantastic existence for somebody like himself, who had consistently derided whatever faintly smelt of romantic action There came to Icaros an English licorice-grower, Joe Hoggart, who at the age of fifty-five had reluctantly quitted the mainland when war broke out with Turkey and, after sending home his wife and family, decided to remain in Icaros, which was as near as he could safely remain to his property He was short and stocky with grizzled hair, a fresh complexion, and a pair of bright pale blue eyes the anxious perplexity in which gave a most misleading impression of his honesty, courage, astuteness, and perseverance In Joe Hoggart Emil decided he should find the ideal partner for establishing his system of communication between Icaros and the mainland, and shortly after their first meeting he put the scheme before him

Joe Hoggart blinked

"I'd call Henry Peterman a rascal, Mr Stern I'd say between you and I and the gatepost that there wasn't a bigger rascal between Constant and Adana He and Old

Rainbow have handed me one or two dirty deals over licorice Very dirty deals Still and all, mind you, I'm not saying Henry Peterman isn't the best one you could have picked for the little job of work you've set him We'll want a boat "

"I have funds to get a boat "

"There's a motor-boat belonging to 'Edwards which he used when he was working in Samos on the remains of the old city I think we might get his wife to sell it to us "

Bertram Edwards was a scholar and archæologist who had added much to the knowledge of the great aqueduct and tunnel of Eupalinus and of Samian antiquities in general He was also the greatest living authority on Athenæus He was now a man of seventy married to an exacting and hysterical Greek wife thirty years younger than himself Emil had looked forward to meeting him as one of the pleasures of his new post, but Edwards, infuriated by the interruption to his work caused by the Balkan war, had shut himself up in his house in Icaros and declined to see anybody He had been suffering also from anxiety about his financial future since the outbreak of war when one or two securities had ceased payment, and his wife had the greatest difficulty in extracting from him the necessary household money, a grievance of which she made no secret, discussing her position volubly with anybody who would listen to her in such houses as she visited

Joe Hoggart was right Mrs Edwards was delighted to sell the boat without mentioning the matter to her husband The engine of the *Samaena* was temperamental, but she drew not more than three feet of water, could be sailed in a favourable wind, and was not too heavy to respond to a pair of sweeps Edwards had painted the prow to the resemblance of a boar's head to justify her name, but Joe Hoggart and Emil considered this rather too conspicuous as also the brilliant vermilion of the rest

of her woodwork. So she was given two coats of warship grey which they cadged from the stores of a destroyer that put in to Icaros for a day at the end of November.

Although Emil and his partner tried to pretend to themselves that nobody in Icaros knew what they were doing, it was soon an open secret that they were making mysterious trips northward to the coast round Scala Nova and southward to the Gulf of Miletos. The general impression was that Emil was taking advantage of his present isolated position as a consul to run the Allied blockade and do a little profitable smuggling.

Withers got to hear of this rumour and was indignant, but Emil told him to fortify it.

"What, let these Greeks think His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul is smuggling coffee and *capotes anglaises* to the Turks? Well, if that hasn't torn it."

"If it's torn many of them, the next generation of Turks will be like the old man of Cape Horn," Joe Hoggart guffawed.

Emil did not appreciate the full force of the allusion, but companionship with Joe Hoggart on those nocturnal expeditions when the moon was hidden and the winter sea was fairly calm had already (to himself in moments of introspection incredibly) changed his attitude toward existence, and to the evident disapproval of Withers he too laughed loudly.

"Seems to me, I'm the only one who's as you were in this Consulate," he remarked severely. "Even Condo gets a free trip to Athens once a month."

Condo himself was far from enjoying those free trips, most of his time at sea being spent on his knees in front of the eikon of St Nicolas, patron and protector of mariners, on the forward bulkhead of the saloon in the small Greek steamer which maintained communications, and the agony of the passage was not made up for by the two days he could enjoy in Athens.

In January Condo brought back from Captain Spicer's representative in Athens a sealed package in which was enclosed an Anglo-Italian pocket dictionary, a small box-wood rule measured to the millimetre, and directions, to be burnt after being assimilated, how to convert the dictionary and the rule into the most impregnable cypher yet invented. He brought back on the same trip a useful wad of notes for the Consulate safe.

"If ever I meet the fellow who invented this cypher," said Withers one morning about four o'clock when he had encyphered a 2,000-word telegram into 3,000 five-figure groups, the result of Emil's examination of an unusually intelligent party of Greek refugees who had reached Icaros from the interior of Anatolia, "if ever I meet him I'll make him swallow his dictionary whole and put his ruler where he won't want to look for it."

In February Emil sent Joe Hoggart to Athens to have a confidential talk with Captain Spicer's representative about plans for the spring. Joe came back with the information of the deadliest secrecy, to wit that all intelligence centres in the Eastern Mediterranean must redouble their efforts to obtain reliable information about the disposition and morale of Turkish troops and most urgently of all about the fortifications of the Dardanelles which were proceeding so urgently.

So when next Joe Hoggart and Emil landed in a shadowy little cove on the coast south of the Mycale promontory and struck two matches, listening to the sea dragging at the shingle until from the woodland they saw an answering match, they had with them a Greek newspaper which the messenger was to give into the hands of Kyrios Peterman. This newspaper Peterman would carry into his inner room and treat with a decoction that resembled ink, after which he would inwardly curse Emil Stern and that sly b——r Joe Hoggart, who would like as well to see him stood up against a wall as he would like

to see Joe Hoggart And the reason for this cursing was that Peterman was being invited to find reliable friends who could travel as far down the Gallipoli peninsula as possible and report what was going on

"I was just to wait here and pass de stuff along before Now I've got to find de stuff myself as well "

However, Peterman felt sure Stern knew something of what he was doing in the way of breaking the Allied blockade in his own interests and decided it might be as well, especially now he was linked up with that old fox Joe Hoggart, to make an effort to get him the information he wanted So he offered Theodore Pappous and Emmanuel Tantalides a salary of 300 drachmas a month and expenses, which he entered in his account against the British Government as 400 drachmas and expenses three times as large as what he actually allowed them, to make their way down into the Gallipoli peninsula with the avowed object of securing permission to trade with the troops

Three weeks later Theodore Pappous returned Emmanuel Tantalides did not Nor was he heard of again Pappous brought what Peterman fancied was pretty hot information about the February bombardment It was so hot that he felt he could charge up the expenses of Emmanuel Tantalides to the British Government, even though he never came back to claim them

Emil received the information safely and was encyphering it in a telegram to Captain Spicer's representative in Athens by way of the British Legation just at the moment when Sir Ian Hamilton, after steaming full speed across the Mediterranean from Marseilles to arrive in time to take part in the attempt of the ships to force the Narrows on March 18th, was writing in his diary

The *Irresistible*, the *Ocean* and the *Bouvet* are gone! The *Inflexible* and the *Gaulois* are badly mauled

The news of that disastrous March day had upset Icaros badly, and the depression was not allayed by the arrival of a Gounarist Nomarch to replace the jovial Venizelist who had been so friendly to Emil Venizelos had resigned on March 5th when he had failed to persuade the King to join the attack on the Dardanelles. In Icaros it was expected that the General Election would soon be held and that this objectionable chalky-faced little Gounarist hanger-on would be sent packing. The news that the Entente had offered Greece 50,000 square miles of Asia Minor in return for ceding a part of Thrace to Bulgaria had filled Icaros with wild dreams of a Hellas herself again, and though the news of the March fiasco made these dreams a little vague in outline, they soon began to take shape again. Venizelos would come back to power. The Dardanelles would be forced next time. When they were forced, the Greek Army would march to Constantinople, and the black eagle of Byzantium on its field of gold would roost again on Santa Sophia.

A fortnight later all the world except the people of Great Britain knew that a great military force was being gathered at Alexandria to effect what the British Navy had failed to effect. Captain Spicer's representative in Athens telegraphed for information and more information. At all costs it must be ascertained how many Turkish troops were on the Gallipoli peninsula, how much damage the forts had suffered from the March bombardment, how many guns were still active, what movements of troops were taking place south of Smyrna, what was the morale of the population, what likelihood there was of the Greeks in Asia Minor causing enough trouble to immobilize a portion of the enemy's forces, how acute was the shortage of supplies, and so on.

Then came a telegram summoning Emil to Athens. The avowed purpose of his visit was to report on the problem of the Greek refugees who had fled from the

mainland more like than Shelley's dead leaves to ghosts from an enchanter fleeing How to clothe, feed, and house this stricken multitude?

The first person Emil saw in the offices of the commission charged with helping these wretched creatures was Dr Miltiades Vampas, not yet his old pre-war bureaucratic self, but after a few months in Athens obviously on the way back to sleekness and security

"Ah, my god, Mr Stern, I am very glad to see you looking so well I have told everybody how you saved my life and the lives of my wife and my six daughters last November You want to see Mr Manners?" He called with an air of lordly authority to a sleepy-looking old man who was sitting by the door and counting mechanically a chaplet of fat amber beads A stranger would have supposed he was praying, but such chaplets, whatever their original purposes, were now used merely to distract the idle mind

"Spiro!" Dr Vampas commanded grandly "Go upstairs and ask Mr Drayton to let Mr Manners know that the British Consul from Icaros wishes to see him"

The old man still clicking away at his beads slithered off on his errand, and presently returned to conduct Emil to the office upstairs where three or four young men were working away at a very big map pegged on a trestle-table

"Hullo, Stern," said a lean young man with pince-nez called Drayton, a contemporary of Emil's in the Consular Service whom he particularly disliked "I say, that last packet of information you sent was fearful gup I hope you didn't pay much for it All it did for us was to give us about six hours' unnecessary work trying to place your imaginary regiments until we gave it up as a bad job It just contradicts the first-rate stuff we've been getting in from S at Dedeagatch, confirmed by Tenedos, Mytilene, and Chios"

"I sent you the information to be checked up here," said Emil coldly "I did not claim it was from a reliable source "

"I know, old man," said Drayton condescendingly "But you might remember we're snowed under here and that if you don't sort your stuff a bit better it just means hours of extra work for us "

"It's a pity you're not acting vice-consul in one of the islands, Drayton You might learn something about the difficulties of espionage "

"Hi, hi! For God's sake don't use that word here," Drayton protested "Do remember what we are "

"It would be difficult to forget," Emil retorted contemptuously

The young men working at the map looked up Indignation scowled from their bright ingenuous countenances Débutantes openly accused of not being virgins they might have been

"Now don't get your rag out, Stern," said Drayton "I only told you because Manners grumbled to me, and I thought I'd warn you beforehand I expect he'll want to see you " He walked across the office and knocked at an inner door "Go right in, will you?" he said to Emil

When Emil entered the sanctum of Captain Spicer's representative in Athens, a trim little man with a grey moustache and imperial and carefully greased grey hair brushed back from the forehead rose from the chair behind his large desk and bowed courteously to Emil before shaking hands It was his first sight of Mr Manners, and he might have wondered if the name was a deliberately appropriate pseudonym had he not heard from Joe Hoggart that as Mr Sydney Manners he had been a well-known figure in the cosmopolitan life of Constantinople for the last twenty years

"Plenty of money Always kept open house and a good

table But always a mysterious sort of a chap, Sydney” That had been Joe Hoggart’s summary of him

“I’m *so* glad to meet you at last, Mr Stern,” he said in a smooth, almost a slippery voice “Do take a pew Yes, rather! Awfully glad! You’ve been getting us some top-ping stuff The Chief was awfully keen on your work Yes, rather! Just lately it’s been a little, just a little bit now don’t misunderstand me, Stern just a little bit wild Is that the word I want? Yes, rather! Of course, I know P is always inclined he was in fact doing some work for us a few years ago, and I had to give up using him To be frank, I was a little bit, yes, just a little bit astonished when you took him on before leaving Mileto”

“I’d received no instructions,” said Emil “I had to decide at a moment’s notice what was to be done to maintain communications”

“Oh, quite, quite, quite, quite, *quite!* Yes, rather! We understood that Don’t suppose for one moment, Stern, that I’m criticizing your engagement of Peter of P”

“And if he plays any tricks I have a stranglehold over him through John Biddulph They’re working some game together in the matter of contraband of war”

Mr Manners jumped up

“Mr Stern! I do not wish to hear that kind of accusation made against a man like John Biddulph, a man, I may add, who has been a dear personal friend of mine for thirty years What grounds have you for making such a rash accusation?”

“I’m sorry, Mr Manners”

“Manners, Manners Please drop the prefix Don’t let us be too formal, Stern I quite understand You spoke hastily We’ll consider it unsaid Yes, rather!” he resumed his seat

“What I was going to say when you interrupted me

was that I have good grounds for making such an accusation," Emil insisted "I have not been in the Service seven years without numerous opportunities to observe the standards of commercial honesty among British Levantines What I regretted was allowing myself to speak so plainly about a friend of yours I am satisfied Peterman will do his best, which seems all that matters "

"Quite, oh, quite! Yes, rather! But I think, if you *don't* mind my saying this, Stern, that you *ought* to sift P's stuff a little more thoroughly before you send it on to us The last batch of information about the distribution of the enemy's troops was well, I'm afraid I must be blunt and call it worthless "

"I thought as much myself, and I marked it as from an unreliable agent "

"But you telegraphed it That's the point, my dear fellow You telegraphed it And we have to think of our expenses Was that information worth the labour of encoding and decoding *and* the money it cost to send?"

"What good is any information unless it is telegraphed? If I had waited for a messenger you wouldn't have received it until to-day And in justice to Peterman you must remember I engaged him merely to organize a collecting and distributing centre It was only when some of your other sources of information dried up and owing to the Dardanelles project more information was urgently required that I told Peterman to recruit some friends for us "

"Well, well, don't let's say another word about it Let's forget about this little incident I understand your difficulties All I want you to do is to try to understand mine It is I who have to deal with London, and when the Chief gets annoyed it is I who suffer And you must remember the Chief's difficulties too He has Lord K to deal with not to mention the Admiralty *and* the Foreign Office We mustn't let him down in Athens,

Stern That's what I feel so strongly But I did *not* mean to raise this subject to-day Captain Selward has come here from Alexandria He is on Sir Ian Hamilton's staff, and he is anxious to discuss with you the project you outlined for raising a corps of Greek irregulars among the refugees to harass the Turks at different points of the Asia Minor coast and thus keep back a certain number of troops from the Peninsula He's a very intelligent fellow and quite agrees with me that this combined naval and military operation to open the Dardanelles is not going to be anything in the nature of a picnic No, rather not!"

At this point Drayton came in to say Captain Selward had arrived

The newcomer who had travelled from Alexandria in a destroyer, which was waiting for him at Phalerum to take him up to Mudros, had borrowed from the captain a decayed tweed coat to wear in place of his tunic and had bought a soft felt hat on his way into Athens As the captain of the destroyer was a burly fellow and Captain Selward was a dapper little man the tweed coat looked rather like a dressing-gown on him, and its decayed appearance was intensified by the extreme newness of the rather showy grey felt hat which was the only one in the shop that would fit him, and by his own beautifully cut khaki slacks and khaki shirt He was a fierce-looking little man with a high complexion and small ebony moustache, and Emil was prepared to dislike him as a damned soldier who would look down on him as a vice-consul However, the first words of Captain Selward won his heart

"Oh, you're Stern, are you? I'm awfully obliged to you for fagging to come all the way from Icaros to have a pow-wow The General was rather taken with this notion of yours to raise this corps of Greek irregulars, but he doesn't think anything can be done until we've

landed on the Peninsula. If the scheme's to be any good we shall want the Navy's help, and at present the Admiralty can't spare a ship of any kind. Look here, let's go and have a spot of grub somewhere and talk it over."

"Indiscreet," Manners snapped. "Most indiscreet. The only place to discuss such a project is here."

Selward looked at him, wrinkling his finely cut little nose.

"But I wanted to have a private pow-wow with Stern," he insisted.

From the corner of his eye Emil marked a baleful expression flit across the urbane countenance of Captain Spicer's representative in Athens.

"As you please, Selward, as you please, but of course you realize that for all intelligence matters Stern is at the disposition of Captain Spicer. Yes, rather! I'm not being obstructive. Please don't, please do not suppose that, but ours is such a very delicate organization that independent action by any one of its members might seriously affect the mechanism of the whole. Captain Spicer in London must be kept apprised of all that is happening. And he likes to communicate with any branch in the Eastern Mediterranean through me only."

"I know dear old Wade would be only too delighted to let me have Stern's services," Selward declared.

Mr Manners squealed like the White King when he was picked up by Alice.

"Selward, do realize, please, please do realize that we are doing difficult and dangerous, yes, dangerous work in a neutral capital. That name! I beg you will never again mention Captain Spicer's real name in this office."

He mopped his brow with a handkerchief, but Selward only chuckled.

"Aren't you rather overdoing all this mystery stuff, Manners?" he asked.

"You really must allow me to be the best judge of that, Selward. I am responsible for the safety of those who are working under me."

Emil was afraid lest Manners, who was evidently extremely jealous of his own position, might spoil his chance of working with Selward unless he were handled tactfully. He had been long enough in the Consular Service to know what damage can be done to a man's career by a word neatly dropped in the right quarter.

"I think Manners is right," he said. "I think we ought to discuss the scheme here. I don't know Athens well, and we might go to the wrong place for lunch."

So the project was talked over on the spot, and Manners, who was as anxious to keep in with somebody on the Staff of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force as to put a spoke in the wheel of Vice-Consul Stern, promised to interest Captain Spicer himself and obtain his blessing for any work Emil might do in direct touch with the Military. Emil saw that Selward was on the verge of rubbing in that he had already seen Captain Spicer in London, but he managed to warn him by a shake of the head not to rub this in, and all passed off well.

"Well, I don't know what you are, Stern, but I'm devilish hungry," said Selward, "and as I don't suppose I'll get a meal in an hotel till we reach Constantinople, I'm going to the Grande Bretagne. Are you both lunching with me?"

"I'd rather not, Selward," said Manners. "I don't like the idea of compromising myself by being seen with you. It will be known that you arrived in the *Bloodhound* this morning, and I'd rather be excused, if you won't think it dreadfully churlish of me. And if you're lunching with Selward, Stern, would you mind letting him get five minutes start of you? I don't want to attract any more attention to our place here than is absolutely necessary."

So Selward went on ahead to the Grande Bretagne, and Manners gave Emil a few words of advice

"A nice chap, Selward An *awfully* nice chap But you will remember, won't you, my dear fellow, that soldiers are shockingly indiscreet? Keep to general topics at lunch Athens is full of enemy agents When does your boat leave? This evening? Oh well, after lunch perhaps you'd like to have another little chat with me? I'm so glad your work is being appreciated where one wants it to be appreciated I'll back you up You needn't be afraid Oh, I'll back you up Yes, rather!"

Selward had found a secluded table at the Grande Bretagne where he and his guest could talk without being overheard by neighbouring guests, and although Emil was not much interested in food he found himself enjoying the European cuisine after many months of semi-Asiatic feeding He enjoyed too the light white wine called Dekeleia which came from the King's vineyards near his country house at Tatoi

"I heard of you first," Selward said, "from a friend of yours in the centre of the Spiceries in Adelphi Terrace"

"Who was that?"

"Chap called Ogilvie J P Ogilvie"

"John Ogilvie? What on earth's he doing there?"

"He's one of these temporary Nelsons Lieutenant in what the pukka Navy calls the sea-lice The old man has taken a great fancy to him and swears he won't let go of him, but Ogilvie himself is dead keen to get out here, and I think we shall manage it for him"

"On the bridge of a destroyer?" Emil enquired sarcastically

"No, I don't think we can quite manage that But I'm going to try to get him attached as interpreter either to some ship or to one of the units ashore"

"What's he going to interpret?"

"Turkish and Greek "

"But "

"Oh yes, he does," Selward interrupted "He started off when he was staying with you at Mileto last spring, and he's been mugging at the two languages ever since I think I'll manage something for him The chief difficulty is to get him away from Adelphi Terrace The old man doesn't like parting with anybody who keeps him amused Yes, it was from Ogilvie I heard about you "

"Not from Manners?" Emil asked, and his moustache was not heavy enough to hide the curl of his lip

"Manners is, very knowledgeable," said Selward "I found that out when I was Assistant Military Attaché in Constantinople He has a pull in all sorts of things I think Wade did well to get him as his representative in Athens "

"Wade's all right, but I can't stick Manners "

"Yes, I know he's a bit slimy, but after all "

Selward broke off and filled Emil's glass

"This is slimy work, you mean?" Emil pressed

"We're all in it," said Selward with a grin

"Yes, but you'll be in it presently with at any rate the possibility of danger to yourself It's putting other people into danger that I don't like "

"I don't think there'll be much danger in Gallipoli," said Selward

"The last information I telegraphed indicated that the Turks were more than ready for any landing," Emil reminded him

"Yes, but you forget what naval gunfire can do in the way of destroying the most elaborate beach fortifications We start by attacking the forts directly We shall clean up the peninsula as we move along, and the ships will move up the Dardanelles simultaneously "

"It sounds very easy over this bottle of wine," said Emil
"But I don't believe it is going to be quite so easy I'm

not at all superstitious, but I don't like that gathering in Lemnos "

"What's the matter with it? Mudros was the only possible harbour for the armada we're collecting "

"The old Greeks believed Lemnos brought a curse on everything that came out of it "

"My dear man, you sound to me extremely superstitious "

"No, no," said Emil "Prejudice is not necessarily superstition When anybody is as much steeped as I am in literature in which the Hellespont has always spelt disaster he cannot help feeling less confident than men to whom it is no more than a crack through which the sea flows between Europe and Asia "

"Well, in this case I don't think you need worry We ought to be in Constantinople by the end of May at the very latest And that's when the fun will begin If those jolly fellows in France don't spike our guns much more effectively than Johnnie Turk is ever likely to do, we hope to make contact with the Russians and advance across the plains of Hungary and into Germany by way of her weakest frontier By September the war ought to be over "

"It all sounds splendid," Emil murmured "Hardly worth while bothering about Greek irregulars "

"No, that's where you're wrong It's when Constantinople falls that these jolly lads will be useful in keeping the Turks busy in Asia Minor "

"But if Constantinople falls you'll have the Greek regular army to deal with Asia Minor "

"If we let them If we let them I think they've missed the boat by listening to Tino instead of Venizelos That offer of Smyrna and the hinterland was for help now, not when we've done all the work And the same goes for the Italians If they don't hurry up and get into the war, *they'll* miss the boat too "

The next time Emil saw Selward was on that parched promontory of the isle of Imbros where tents had been pitched to house the General Staff of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force for a week or two until the Turks had been driven far enough back along the peninsula to allow them to encamp at Helles for another week or two before they mounted their horses to ride on to Constantinople. It had never been intended that they should go ashore at all, but the arrival of German submarines had made it impossible to keep a Commander-in-Chief and his staff in a transport any longer. May had passed, June had passed, it was now mid-July, and the encampment was still where it had originally been pegged out.

"I wanted you to come up on a very confidential matter," Selward told Emil, and he outlined for him the plan of the Suvla landing in the first week of August.

"But what has that to do with me?" asked Emil, whose ten thousand Anatolian irregulars with whom he had hoped to rival Xenophon's Ten Thousand were still only a topic for heartbreaking correspondence. Then he waited attentively, wondering if perhaps the great moment had come when the word would be given to go ahead. There was no sign of Greece's marching in spite of the return of Venizelos to power last month.

"I want you to put up a bluff that we are going to attack Mileto and Smyrna," Selward announced.

"Oh, you don't want the irregulars at last?"

"It would be quite a sound notion to start recruiting among the refugees. That would help to make the Turks think we are going to have a shot at them from another angle."

"Look here, Selward, if it's only to be a bluff don't ask me to recruit these poor devils. You haven't seen any refugees here. You don't know what they are suffering. Good God, women and children drop down dead of starvation in front of you as you walk along the street. Men

whose wives have been raped and bayoneted are waiting for their revenge Fathers whose daughters have been carried off to the harems of the interior are waiting for their revenge I can't go and tell these fellows that they shall have their revenge and then tell them it was all a bluff "

"All right, old thing, don't get worked up There's no chance at the moment of getting the heads to sponsor this plan of yours to raise these irregulars Perhaps after this Suvla show anyway I see your point Don't do anything about the refugees Just start making enquiries about possible sites for camps for thirty or forty thousand troops Go into the matter of the water supply Do anything you think best to make the Turks wonder The more troops they send south the better it will be for us This Suvla landing is neck or nothing If it doesn't succeed we may as well give up all hope of reaching Constantinople this year "

Emil looked at the dapper little Captain His high colour had been burnt brick-red, but his bright intelligent eyes were dimmer than they had been in Athens, and all the sunburn could not hide the drawn lines of his face

"You're not looking too well "

"Oh, I'm a bit fagged at the moment I was working all through June on the beach by Lancashire Landing and got a touch of this damned dysentery Besides, the constant shelling upset my clerks Very annoying And I couldn't be angry with them Some people simply hate being shelled in a tent, you know "

"I can quite understand that," said Emil drily

"It doesn't worry me, because I'm always concentrated on what I'm doing, but it's a fearful bore when you turn round for an orderly and find he's bolted into a funk-hole It puts everything back And the whole business has been very disheartening We've been badly let down at home And Johnny French is as jealous as the devil of

this show of ours So's old Joffre Getting these three divisions of Lord K's Army will be frightfully resented Winston's being pushed out of the Admiralty into the Duchy of Lancashire isn't going to help us Still, if the Suvla landing comes off we may straddle the peninsula, and begin to go ahead By the way your friend Ogilvie's out here "

"He is ?"

"Yes, dear old Wade let him go in May on the understanding that if his services are required by his organization he's to have him back any time "

"Where is he now?"

"Working as Intelligence officer with the N T O at Anzac nominally, but actually looking after any brigands of mine that are there I have a counter-espionage show on all the beaches Manners sent me some fellows just after the landing, but they were denounced in Athens as fishy and we had to send the whole bunch to Malta for the duration Probably a bit of jealousy in Athens, but one can't afford to take any risks "

Early next morning, on his way down to the trawler which would take him back to Icaros, Emil met John coming up the sandy path from the beach He was wearing a khaki drill uniform like stained light-brown paper and a white sun-helmet round which zigzagged the thin dark-blue line that indicated Britannia's power over the waves

"Emil, how marvellous to meet you!" he cried "I knew that there was a possibility of it as a matter of fact, because Selward told me you were coming up from your island kingdom I took the chance of coming over from Anzac in a torpedo-boat in the hope of catching you What time does your trawler sail?"

"Six o'clock "

"Oh, good, we've got twenty minutes for what Selward calls a gentle little pow-wow We'll get the pinnace to take you off at five to six "

He turned and shouted, "Pinnacle, ahoy!" The bearded coxswain looked round and held on with his boathook to the short jetty

"Can you wait for Mr Stern till five to six? He wants to be taken to the trawler going to Mytilene"

"Ay, ay, sir I'll be back in twenty minutes"

They walked down to the little jetty and sat on some sacks in the benignity of the early morning sunlight, which threw long shadows from the tents on the parched slope behind them and beamed across the placid waters of the roadstead to illuminate the smoke issuing from the rest camp at the other end of the mile of sandy beach and the sunk steamer that served for its pier and the sage-green line of the Imbros hills above which the peak of mighty Samothrace rose cloudily

"You'll get breakfast in the trawler," said John "I had a grand breakfast in the t b That's one thing about the Navy, you do get a good breakfast I was rather hoping Selward might send me on some cut-throat expedition down your way"

Emil thought how ridiculously young John looked It was as if by putting on this uniform he had shed the years Even his manner of speech was that of a recently promoted sub-lieutenant

"You're looking very well," he told him

"I've kept awfully fit so far," John replied "It just proves what rot it was refusing me for active service Not that I'm sorry now I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything But I had a great job to get away from my old man"

"I thought he was rather an agreeable old man," Emil said

"Yes, you saw him before you went back to Mileto, didn't you? He was very pleased with your work, but between you and me what's this chap Manners like?"

Emil twitched the lapel of his coat in the Greek gesture that signifies utter condemnation of a man's habits, morals, brains, and breeding

"Yes, I rather divined that I think he's been crabbing your work a bit with the Chief Over those Anatolian irregulars and those cattle-driving raids on the mainland you wanted to organize Of course I've not heard anything lately All I used to be able to say was that if you thought they were worth doing they probably were worth doing Selward is quite keen, I know But everybody here is so depressed that he can't get any action taken "

Emil wondered, if John knew anything about the Suvla plan However, having been sworn to secrecy about it by Selward, he did not ask him

"If I had been allowed to go ahead I could have made a nasty mess of the Turks in Anatolia," Emil declared

"You know, it amazes me to hear *you* talking like that," John exclaimed "I'm sure you'd make a jolly good *roi des montagnes*, but I should have thought it was against your theory of life However, I suppose once you became a consul anything was possible in the way of your mental development "

"I want to get back on the Turks," said Emil "I think they're a bestial anachronism "

"I don't think they're any more bestial than the Germans "

"Probably if I'd been a consul in Belgium or France I should have felt like that about the Germans But these refugees haunt me, John I feel I must do something to the brutes who have caused such unspeakable misery to women and children "

"Yes, but is that remark quite up to your logical level? Surely the people who caused the war are primarily responsible for these wretched refugees I'd like to let ten thousand Anatolian irregulars loose on the party politicians who ravished Ireland "

"I've never felt very strongly about Ireland I dislike the Irish too much," said Emil

"But surely you resent the way these Unionists have jockeyed themselves into this Coalition Government?"

"I suppose that was better than having a General Election Anyway, it all seems very far away here"

"That's true By Jove, I am enjoying myself Man requires action, Emil It ripens him like the sun I feel perpetually now as if I'd drunk just enough champagne"

"You haven't seen those refugees You wouldn't be so enthusiastic about war if you had"

"Yes, but unhappiness, poverty, pain, and starvation are always going on in the world"

"Not to the extent that they are in time of war No, for me the only excuse for this war is the clearing up that will follow it"

"I wonder if it will?"

"It will," Emil declared

"Yet you must be honest," John argued, "and admit that in your own way you too are enjoying this war You too are finding the excitement of action galvanizing War may still be a physical necessity of mankind in its present development After all, your clearing up will only be another kind of war If you abolished war between nation and nation, you'd only have war between class and class"

"That would be a sane war"

"I doubt if you can distinguish between a sane and an insane war But what I want you to be is honest and admit that you are enjoying yourself"

Emil paused before answering

"I suppose I am," he assented at last "But only relatively I wouldn't choose what I'm doing now as an ideal occupation All I will admit is that I am lucky enough to be in a job that so far has not involved me in any action of which I disapprove So far as I am trying to injure the

Turks I am justified by the visible proof I have of their brutality ”

“Yes, but these ten thousand irregulars of yours You know what horrors they would commit Do you really believe you would be right to let them loose in Anatolia? Or isn’t it really that you want to be doing something? Haven’t you been caught by the prevailing fever?”

“Perhaps I have ”

“And that being so you’ll have to be a little more tolerant of other people when the war is over Have you heard from Julius lately?”

“Not for several months ”

“I heard from him just before I left to come out here He finds even in America that the war keeps him from doing any creative work ”

“He always seized any available excuse to be kept from doing that,” Emil scoffed “I have never considered he was really a creative artist The best thing he can do is to produce a son ”

“I was going on to say that apparently that is just what he hopes to do Some time in the autumn Meanwhile, you and I will just go on being destructive ”

“I’m not sure that producing children when the world is behaving like this is not being destructive ”

“I thought you were hoping for great results from this war?” said John

“So I am But all depends on the course the war takes, and the time it lasts It looks like being a stalemate at present, and that might lead to an armed preparation for the next war ”

Emil wished he knew if John had any notion of what was brewing out here He wanted to tell him that the future of the world might be settled by the result of this proposed Suvla Bay landing, but he dreaded an indiscretion and kept silence The conversation lagged The pinnace would be coming back to the jetty at any minute

Ah, there it was scudding over the placid waters of the roadstead

"I wonder if you'll ever get down to Icaros," he said

"You never know Selward might have some job for me in the islands," John replied "But I'm kept pretty busy at Anzac at present Anyway, it's been good to get a glimpse of you, Emil I'm glad I had the energy to get up early and cadge a passage in the t b So long"

"So long"

A quarter of an hour later Emil was drinking coffee with the skipper of the trawler as she steamed along between the low biscuit-coloured cliffs of Imbros and the slightly sinister cliffs of the Peninsula covered with dark brushwood On to drop anchor off Cape Helles and pick up the mails The iron-plated deck of the trawler grew hot as the sun gained power The ship's cat lay outstretched in sun-steeped contentment The ship's dog was already panting, but too lazy to seek the shade cast by the bridge There seemed some confusion ashore, and one of the crew told the passenger it was probably Asiatic Annie's morning strafe The mails came out The trawler got under weigh again The swarm of human life about that tawny landscape was lost to view The sugar-loaf of Mt Elias on Tenedos took on a clearer outline Southward all day the trawler steamed, passing between olive-silvery Lesbos and the cliffs of Asia to lie in Mytilene harbour that night Next morning the trawler continued on her way to Chios, and on southward between Chios and Cheshmewhere a Turkish gun dropped three or four shells a quarter of a mile short and then southward still until she sailed into the port of Icaros

"Rather exciting news, Joe," Emil announced to Joe Hoggart

"What is it? Our ten thousand arranged for?"

"No, but we're going to attack Mileto with three divisions, hold the Smyrna-Panderma railway, and

advance northward up the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles ”

“Golly! That’s just *our* cup of tea, isn’t it?”

“And I spoke to Captain Selward about getting you commissioned rank I think you’ll soon be Lieutenant Hoggart, R N V R ”

On the quay of Icaros the stocky figure of Joe Hoggart performed a brief hornpipe, to the astonishment of the natives who had never seen the licorice-grower so much stirred from his usual imperturbability When the rumour began to run round that British troops and British ships would soon be attacking Mileto nothing went so far to establish the veracity of the rumour as the hornpipe Joe Hoggart had danced upon the quay at Icaros that July day

John caught the Anzac trawler at nine after an early confabulation with Selward about matters on the beach at Anzac, though to call that narrow run of sand almost continuously under fire a beach was not to use quite the right word He made himself comfortable aft and during what had by now become the routine of a dull voyage meditated on the news which Selward had almost whispered to him this morning Selward believed that counter-espionage was working well at Anzac Nevertheless there was always the chance of a leakage, and it would do no harm if an indiscreet whisper that an attack was being planned, on the Anatolian coast either against Smyrna or Mileto was carried across to the Turkish lines But the truth! The glorious truth! Surely at last the Dardanelles attempt was coming into its own He would confide in Yanni, who was a Greek from Scala Nova not far from where the rumoured attempt would be made Yes, he would confide in Yanni who would hardly be able to help confiding in one or two of his fellow Anatolians It

wouldn't be fair to tell Gardiner a lie. Gardiner who had spent the last six weeks with him in that little dug-out in the side of the tawny cliff between two arbutus bushes might not forgive even a serviceable lie. And even to Gardiner he must not mention a word of the truth. After all Emil had abstained from telling him the truth this morning, and it must have been a temptation to do so.

A little more of this war and Emil would forget about his revolutions and settle down to his career. Promotion would be rapid. Yes, he'd end yet as Sir Emil Stern, K C M G. He must write and tell Miriam about meeting him. It was difficult to write letters out here. Nobody could understand the kind of life one was leading, and anyway when the day was over and one hadn't been hit by a piece of shrapnel it was pleasanter to lie back and stare at the beams supporting the roof of the dug-out and listen to Gardiner's perplexities about his emotional future with the girl to whom he was engaged. For himself the very thought of woman out here was the thought of woman on another planet. Normal life was hardly imaginable. There wasn't even time to think about being killed, which might happen at any moment of the long, dusty, noisy, sunburnt day. Any time not taken up in dealing with possible spies was sufficiently occupied in dealing with corpse-gorged flies. If only he could keep clear of dysentery. No sign of it yet. Unimaginative sticks, that's what doctors were. Twice certified unfit for active service, and he was standing it much better than half the chaps out here. Damned fine fellows these Australians and New Zealanders. And if these three new divisions did their job at Suvla the whole Anzac corps would be able to move on. It would be a tragedy if they did not show Constantinople what they had already shown Cairo.

The trawler was approaching Anzac Cove. The water spat like a puddle in rain to a shrapnel burst. There was a rataplan on the deck forward from falling fragments.

"That's the nearest they've been in ten bloody weeks," the old Fleetwood skipper grunted contemptuously "I could shoot better than that my own bloody self"

As a matter of fact the shrapnel on the narrow beach was fairly accurate all day Four men were hit, one fatally John entirely preoccupied with launching his rumour of the Mileto offensive hardly noticed it

In the dug-out that night Gardiner, a long-chinned young R N R lieutenant engaged on N T O work, was particularly talkative on the subject of his fiancée from whom he had had a letter by the Helles trawler

"Look here, Ogilvie, I don't want to worry you unduly with my private affairs, but you are a bit older than me and you've had more experience of women than I have What do you think I ought to do? Listen to this *Your last letter made me rather sad because I feel that you don't understand how difficult everything is for me Before you went away I promised to be engaged to you because I thought it would make you happy, but I never said and I never let you suppose, Tom, that we were to be married on any particular date Now you ask me if I will marry you the first time you get home on leave I have talked it over with Mother, and she thinks it's very unreasonable of you to try and pin me down like that especially when everything is so upset by the war*"

"That doesn't sound very encouraging," John commented

"Do you think she's trying to wriggle out of this engagement?" Gardiner asked His long chin had buried itself despondently in his chest

"Well, I don't know your girl She may only be worried by the uncertainty of everything "

"Everything will be just as uncertain whether she's engaged to me or not," Gardiner said gloomily

"But you must know if she *was* in love with you "

"Must I? I'd like to hear how a man is to know if a girl is in love with him I've been trying to find out if

Gladys was in love with me for the last two years without success. Of course, I was away at sea a good deal, but she always appeared quite pleased when I came home. "Women are a mystery, that's what women are," Gardiner sighed, as he poured himself out a tot of rum.

John would have liked to tell poor Gardiner that when a man believed women were a mystery it was a sure sign that no woman had loved him. But that would have involved an exposition of what love was. And that he was not prepared to give Gardiner in this little dug-out on the roof and walls of which the flies were smeared like dark jam.

"I don't think you ought to worry about her, Gardiner," he said. "You haven't got your leave yet, and you're not likely to get it for some time. See what happens when you meet her again. I find it such a relief to be here right away from such problems. You don't want love here."

"I'm not pining after Gladys, if that's what you mean. But I want to know where I am. I'd like to marry her, Ogilvie, because she's a nice quiet girl, and very pretty in her own way, and she'd make me a good home. When we first got engaged she used to write to me about the houses she'd been looking at. She wants to live in London, and she'd been all round Golder's Green and Beckenham and Hornsey. All over the place, and she's very keen to have what she calls a sparework kitchen and she was always finding neat little gadgets and making a note of them. It's only in the last three or four months she's seemed to resent my talking about our marriage. And she's not one of these dashing modern girls. She's just the sweet little girl any man would want to marry, the kind of little girl that keeps a fellow straight wherever he goes in this wide world."

"Well, my advice is not to press her now," John repeated, "but wait and see what she says when you're at home again. I'm afraid if I'd been engaged to a girl when

I came out here I should have written to tell her it was off because I found war a more engrossing business than love ”

“Jolly cynical that, you know,” said Gardiner gravely “Of course, you’re a brainy chap and all that, but you oughtn’t to let yourself be ruled by your head too much Mind you, I’m not grumbling at the war I might get mentioned in despatches I believe Captain Farquharson is pleased with my work And if the war went on long enough I might get a half stripe and when the war’s over I’d stand a better chance of promotion with the Yellow Funnel Line than before it I’m not grumbling at the war All the same, I am not going to allow it’s better than love And I don’t believe you really think that, Ogilvie ”

“I do, honestly ”

Gardiner shook his head

“Well, I’m going to turn in We’re expecting a lot of stores to-morrow I’ll have a long day ”

But to-morrow was the shortest day of Gardiner’s life, for returning from Shrapnel Gully where he had gone to notify some brigade headquarters of the arrival of their stores he was killed just as he came in sight of the sea

Ogilvie wrote to Gardiner’s mother and father and to Miss Gladys Hancock letters of sympathy, trying to tell them something of the good companionship he and Tom Gardiner had enjoyed in their little dug-out in the Anzac cliff

On the dark nights of the fourth and fifth of August troops were landed at Anzac to reinforce the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and hidden away in the ravines John did not have a wink of sleep On the afternoon of the sixth of August the cruiser *Bacchante* began to shell the Turkish lines The land batteries opened At half-past five the shrilling of whistles was heard along the

heights The Anzacs came over their parapets The great attack was launched, which was to join the Anzac lines with the lines of the new divisions landing that night at Suvla and straddle the Peninsula

Soon after midnight the only hospital ship was full, but Shrapnel Gully and the beach were crowded thicker and thicker with wounded men

"Get this signal off to G H Q at once, Ogilvie "

This hospital ship full AAA When is next one expected? AAA

No other hospital ship came The fighting lasted all that night and all next day, and it would last long enough yet The beach was always thick with wounded men

John tried to make one fellow more comfortable and found him anxious to talk as men often are who have come out of a battle's hell Their minds have temporarily stopped working in the strain of incessant action, in hand-to-hand struggles in black trenches, in rushes over bullet-swept ground, in reek and stench and madness

"Gawd, what a suck in!" he was muttering "What a bloody suck in, mate This is what I came from Loamshire for "

"From Loamshire?" John echoed in surprise

"Yes, I used to be in Haldane's Loamshire Territorials before I went to Australia Did a bit of training with them Captain Pacey-Foote was my company officer "

"Why, I used to be in the Loamshire volunteers myself What an extraordinary coincidence!" John exclaimed "Pacey-Foote was the senior subaltern, I was the junior That was fourteen or fifteen years ago "

"Bit before my time, mate "

They talked for a while of Loamshire, but the wounded man's mind was far from there, thinking of what had brought him to Anzac and to what he kept calling 'this bloody suck in'

"How did you come to be with the Anzacs?" John asked

"Well, I wandered around the world for a bit from 1911 onwards. Got to Vancouver at last and got taken on to work on a poultry-farm. It nearly sent me potty. Those blasted chickens. When war came I reckoned I'd go to Sydney and join up and get out to the Western front by the time things got going. I joined up with the 4th Infantry Battalion and we left Sydney with the first big convoy and nearly run into the *Emden*. However, he was for it, and we heard on board how the *Sydney* was fighting him fifty miles away. They gave us free beer to celebrate. And that was a damned luxury for us privates huddled like cattle. There was three thousand of us aboard. But we didn't care. The men with me were mostly from New South Wales, and we had plenty to jaw about—cattle, wool, sheep, gold, farms, mining, shooting and Gawd knows what. Well, I tell you I never had a dull moment."

"I'll bet you didn't," said John, thinking of some yarns he had heard spun by Australians here in Anzac.

"We had a strenuous time training when we got to Egypt. Marching twenty miles out and twenty miles back in blazing heat and full pack up, and then at night off to play hell in Cairo. Up and at it again at dawn next day until we became the fittest army on earth. Gawd, what men they were! Finest body of men I ever saw put together. Well, we left for Mudros at last, just about in time or we'd have knocked hell out of the Military Police in Cairo the week after. That's a sure thing. We practised with rowboats for two or three days for the landing. But where were we going to land? In hell for all we knew or cared. It came to the twenty-fourth of April and we steamed off on a pitch-black night. I was with my platoon, laying on a hatch-cover. We had 150 rounds of ammunition, iron-rations, and bloody entrenching-tools which wouldn't dig a hole for a rat. I lay awake all night,

mate I always do Even now I sleep only one night a week

"As I lay with all lights out, wondering how I'd get on, I had no fear, but the chap next to me sobbed, and I whispered, 'What the hell's up with you?' 'I know I'll get killed,' he said So I laughed and said, 'I'm damned sure you will, if that's how you faces it' But he knew all right, poor sod, and he was shot in the lungs first night ashore "

"And he did die?" John asked

"Well, he didn't if it comes to that He recovered and went home to Sydney "

"Go on, I didn't mean to interrupt "

"Well, it came three A M and we eased up to nothing And in fact I thought we weren't moving The men in boats ahead of us had already slipped overboard into ships' boats and were rowing ashore or being towed by pinnaces I lay on in a kind of half stupor, thinking of London and all the places I'd been to abroad—Boineo and Sarawak and Auckland and Vancouver At half-past three I heard the very faint crackle of rifle-fire and I knew the advance were under fire How will they get on, I wondered, but had no fear they would land, because of the protection of the cliffs in the dark—unlike the poor devils at Helles Our landing was twice as easy as the Helles one It was the marvel of all out here, I think, the way the British landed at Helles on a slope riddled with fire that could not miss "

"That's what all the Anzacs have told me," said John "They're always generous But go on "

"Well, as I was listening to the rifle-fire, a cruiser on our right opened up The first shell we'd any of us heard From then on it was bedlam, and then dawn came As the light improved we could see our advance crossing green open patches to be lost immediately in gorse bushes or whatever they are on the edges of the small open patches "

John's mind leapt back to that advance on an August day in the sham-fight at Aldershot when one of the men in his half-company had got into trouble with gorse

"And now I saw a wonderful sight This cruiser—I think it was the *London*—blew Gaba Tepe fort to bits We were behind the cruiser and could see each shell-hit and huge masses of masonry flung up and holes appear in the fort Sometimes the shells missed and tore up the sides of the hill at the back It was about noon when my battalion landed I hopped out of the ship's boat up to my waist in sea-water, and an enfilading fire was being slung at the boats as they met the beach The shells from the fort hadn't been silenced yet I ran up the beach casting an eye toward Suvla and noticed in that moment the Navy had a wireless erected and in operation Just in front of me, laying on the beach the same as we are now, there was about five hundred wounded and dying with shrapnel bursting over them, same as we were getting this morning I hopped it to the right and up a gully with the others, and we lay for a long time, with wounded being carried past us down the gully to the beach just like to-day About four in the afternoon we advanced and climbed the hills bearing to the right and when we got to the top we dug in at the head of Shrapnel Gully

"It was a damned cold night and I shivered in my great-coat, crouched down in a trench only four feet deep At dawn the sergeant next to me stood up and exposed his head and shoulders to use his glasses Suddenly he started to snore as I thought, and I looked at him a bit surprised He was close to me, and was snoring out blood from his nose and mouth, having a bullet through his forehead A chap from Newcastle, New South Wales, and me carried the sergeant to the beach All the way down bullets chipped up the sand at my feet, for there were snipers behind our lines for two or three days We got the sergeant to the beach past a nasty open spot where General

Bridges got killed and to my dismay, as we laid him down to rest ourselves, he got another bullet in the head and died. Going back, we carried up water and our thanks was to be called bloody fools by our officer for bothering about wounded. Later we charged on about a mile. I saw nothing but gorse bush, and didn't the air stink of dead men! At the end of a mile a machine-gun opened up on us and we all dived into a trench the Turks had apparently just left. I said 'all' but it was all bar one, and that was me because I was the end of the line and couldn't squeeze in. So I dropped down behind a bush three foot high. The gunner gave me about thirty shots and chipped leaves and bits of twigs all over me. Yet, it's funny, but I didn't think the —s would hit me. Then somebody shouted 'Retire'. So we up and ran. I ran all the way back, and all I passed was one dead Turk. A lieutenant rallied six of us with his revolver and wanted to go back. I thought 'That's rot', and stayed in the trench.

"Presently the whole line came back, and it took three or four days to sort us out into our units, we being all mixed by now. Officers and all. If Johnny Turk had counter-attacked that evening after the advance he'd have wiped us out, I think. Yes, wiped us out he would have."

"They'd had enough of it for the time," said John.

"You're right. But it was enough to break anybody's heart to watch them digging in. Week after week. Where were our reinforcements to push on and take the place? In May the enemy charged at dawn, and we stood up in our trenches, leaning over the parapet, and blew him to hell. It was cruel really, like shooting rabbits."

"Yes, I remember the truce at the end of May when they buried all the dead," John said.

"That's right, there was a whole day's truce. I went down the gully to get a feed. I was half starved and well on for dysentery. Still, the truce didn't last very long. One night I went scouting with four men and a corporal

We weren't more than a hundred yards from the enemy's trench at any time where I was, but this night we crawled over reeking dead bodies to within sound of the Turks' voices. One of our chaps got shot in the head and the corporal carried him back. Yes, and it was back all right, poor sod. In the dark it was easy enough to lose your bearings after crawling about in No Man's Land, and this poor bloody corporal carried the wounded man over into the enemy lines."

"Pretty bad luck!"

"Yes, and there was an enquiry held by the Colonel next day at which I had to give evidence. When the Colonel heard my number 1030, he said, 'How many men did we land with, Sergeant-Major?' '1060, sir,' the Sergeant-Major replied. I reckon the Colonel thought we had only a thousand and that I was trying to swing it on him. Every battalion in our army starts from number one, see? If your name begun with A you might be number one. If it begun with W you'd be round about number one thousand. Yet the men beginning with W might have joined a month or two before the chap who was number one. And didn't this create confusion later on? I give you my word it did. Why, you might have six Smiths all having the same number, though in different units. I expect you'll think I'm making a lot of fuss about nothing, but anything like that gets on anybody's nerves when he's for it all the time, and you haven't anything to do except watch the enemy trenches and fresh defences being made right in front of your eyes. And you'd have to laugh sometimes. We used to shoot at the shovels as Johnny Turk slung up the earth, and he'd wave us a wash-out. It was really comical.

"One day we were shelled by the *Goeben*. At least that's what everybody said it was. And were they whoppers? Well, through my periscope of wood and glass I could see them coming over."

"I know," John agreed "Like flying omnibuses "

"That's right Rumbling through the air Well, they tore the trench up yard by yard But I was lucky, because they chucked it before they reached my part of the trench I was eating nothing and was as thin as hell I was rotten with lice, and going at the knees with dysentery I was smoking a dead man's pipe and wearing his coat with the blood on it where he'd been shot through the heart Worse, I wore my mate's hat with a hole two inches wide where a bullet had blown his brains out When we were off duty we used to go into the gully and look down to the bottom about three hundred yards down and watch to see how many men on fatigue duty would get hit carrying up water and whatnot We thought it as good as a football-match to see the shells lob over and burst One day, about twelve o'clock when all our battalion stew was being cooked half-way down the gully, I saw a huge Plum Pudding, as we used to call them, lob right over and blow all the pots to hell I laughed till the tears run down my cheeks

"Another day the cook got drunk on rum and fell into the fire I never had a drink myself I used to sell my tot for half a crown for a tin of condensed milk, and which kept me alive

"One thing I forgot to tell you was at the end of the first three or four days my company went up to the relief of a company of Marines Every one of the poor devils had been killed by enfilading shell-fire before they'd had time to dig in much over a foot They were all boys of seventeen and eighteen, and one of them reminded me of my brother Fred, who was with the Royal Fusiliers at Helles and was killed last month aged sixteen and a half What a life, eh? Well, these dead Marines I was telling you about—their water-bottles were filled with raw rum! Nice thing to carry about with you if you were thirsty

"Well, then came yesterday, or was it the day before,

or when was it? Damned if I know Ever since the middle of July we'd heard rumours going round about a big new attack Some said we was going to be shipped over to Asia Minor and have a smack at Johnny Turk there Others said, no, we were going to land at Kum Kale and attack the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles But by the beginning of August we knew for a cert that the British were going to land at Suvla at night after we'd charged the Pine and drawn the defences It was reckoned we'd bring up all the Turkish reserves to Lone Pine and leave Suvla unguarded, and which would be an easy cop for the British to walk over to the Narrows And that's where we were bloody well sucked in We did our job all right, though—us and the Navy

"First the Navy stood out three miles and blew hell out of Lone Pine"

"That was the cruiser *Bacchante* and the monitor *Humber*," said John

"Well, they did their job to rights To rights they did it, mate The Turkish line was only about eighty yards from us, and yet not a single bloody shell fell short fired from a three-mile range over the top of cliffs three or four hundred feet high perhaps Friday afternoon that was Friday the sixth of August, and which was my mother's birthday Shooting? Yes, I reckon that *was* shooting, and perhaps the best shooting the Navy ever did What did you say was the name of the cruiser?"

"*Bacchante*"

"There wasn't much 'Back, Auntie' about her Auntie was there all right on Friday afternoon And the row! It sounded to me as I stood there waiting to nip over like ten million tea-trays all falling at once It baffles description And while I was waiting there I didn't feel any fear Just a bit excited, that's all I think knowing that hundreds of young mates are with you and that you'll all go over the top together kills a lot of fear That's

my idea, anyway We wore white patches on our arms and on our back to distinguish us from the enemy There was silence for a second or two while the officers looked at their watches Then the whistle blew, and at half-past five to the tick we hopped over and went forward swept by rifle-fire and shrapnel When we got to the 'Turks' line we found it covered by head-cover and we had to tear up beams to get into the trenches I knelt on one knee to fire down an air-hole, and as I knelt I was shot through the knee by shrapnel I crawled back into No Man's Land half-way to our lines, and I found I was crawling into worse shell-fire which was being directed on our trenches to prevent any reinforcements from following up the attack So I decided to stay where I was, and I lay till about nine o'clock that night on my stomach with my head buried in my hands, glancing up every now and again at the flashes of the shells bursting over my head and all round me And here's a strange thing I never felt a touch of fear Yet four of my mates who were wounded and had crawled up to me got riddled again and again They were all dead within the first hour

"After it was dark the gunfire ceased, and I crawled back into our original front line No one was near me as all our lot had got into the 'Turks' front lines by then It was lovely and quiet I felt quite safe and presently I fell fast asleep

"This morning I was woken up by a shell bursting on the parapet and properly smothering me with earth I struggled up on my feet and standing on my good leg I had a good look round Ahead of me there was constant rifle-fire and bursting shells On my left about a mile or so away I could see the Suvla Salt Lake, a kind of a flat clay-coloured expanse "

"You could?" John exclaimed "And could you see any of our troops?"

"Yes, I could see the British, who according to what we heard ought to have been ashore last night and joining up to our left, landing in broad daylight under heavy shell- and shrapnel-fire and crossing the Salt Lake in extended order. Well, I was so much taken aback that I started to cry in fury and disgust, and that's a fact, mate. Gawd knows how many us Australians had lost, thousands I reckon, but it looks to me as if we'd lost them for nothing. Who *are* the bloody fools who hadn't the brains and the guts to land and push on overnight after we'd drawn all the opposition away from them?" I tell you when I stood up on that parapet this morning and saw the way our last big effort had been —ed up, that was the writing on the wall 'Good-bye, Constantinople,' I sang out, 'Good-bye, Constantinople,' just like that."

"It may not be too late, yet," said John.

"Of course it's too late. I tell you, mate, it's the writing on the wall. Just the same as I knew I wouldn't be killed yesterday, I know it's too late. You don't get two bites at a battle any more than what you do at a cherry."

"And then what did you do?" John asked sadly, for he knew that this wounded Australian lying on the beach was right.

"Well, I crawled out of the trench and down into the gully and was picked up by stretcher-bearers. All the way down what some call the Valley of Death and which we mostly call Shrapnel Gully there were thousands of British troops standing doing nothing and waiting about for orders."

"The Thirteenth Division of the New Army."

"And they looked new," said the wounded Australian. "They oughtn't to have been down in Shrapnel Gully, but three miles inland at Suvla Bay overnight. Not that I'm blaming them, poor devils. But what fool was responsible for their being there? That's what I'm asking. Well, the stretcher-bearers got me down as far as that."

nasty bit where General Bridges was killed and then a bullet broke the neck of the man behind my head. Down I came with a wallop as he fell dead, but perhaps if he hadn't been there to stop it the bullet would have got me or the other stretcher-bearer in front. And now I reckon I'll be in Malta in another three or four days if a Fritz doesn't sink us for a transport. Well, it's done me good to yap for a bit to you. Anybody gets sort of bottled up, and I haven't seen one of my own mates since yesterday. Gawd, what a suck in! What a bloody suck in!"

The wounded Australian was taken off to a hospital ship just before dusk, but as fast as the wounded were evacuated fresh wounded were brought down to the beach day after day. News came along that the Suvla Bay Landing had but added another weight to the weight of responsibility on Gallipoli. It was true that if you liked to take the chance of being potted on the way you could now walk from Anzac to Suvla, but however often you walked that unhealthy three miles you did not find yourself an inch nearer to Constantinople. By the end of August the lassitude of despair had fallen upon the whole invading force, and through the stale September days the foul dysentery spread. A thousand men were laid low every twenty-four hours.

John, fearful of being sent away to Malta in a hospital ship, did his best not to let the attack which seized him incapacitate him completely. He told his commanding officer that if he could have a couple of days' rest he should certainly be all right again. But there was no rest with dysentery.

One day toward the end of September when he had crawled back for the twentieth time from the latrines, and was lying in his dug-out, listlessly fanning the flies from his face with a horsehair whisk, his batman brought him a letter from Tom Gardiner's fiancée written in a rounded colourless hand.

22 LARANDA ROAD,
BALHAM,
S W

August 28

Dear Mr Ogilvie,

I am so grateful to you for writing to me about poor Tom's death As you can imagine it has made me terribly sad We had looked forward to being married shortly and to spending many happy years together What a dreadful business the war is, is it not? And there seems to be some doubt whether it was really wise to go to the Dardanelles at all It is the fashion now for people who have lost relations in the war to wear a band of purple crape I think it is a very beautiful and touching idea, don't you? I hope you will come home safely, and thank you once again for writing to me about poor Tom It is some relief to know that he was killed instantaneously

*Yours very sincerely,
Gladys Hancock*

John let the faintly scented double sheet of thick dekkle-edged notepaper fall to the ground

And Gladys Hancock was one of thousands of young women to whom this war was merely a matter of white feathers or purple crape Was not poor Tom Gardiner better dead than married to one of them and liable to produce daughters like his wife? And the influence these myriads of Gladys Hancocks exercised over contemporary life! They made the successful actor or actress, the successful play, the successful dramatist, the successful novelist They demanded from their husbands a certain standard of mock gentility which persuaded those husbands to maintain in power all that was least progressive in politics By the time the war ended their influence would be trebled, for now that Suvla had failed, the war might

go on for years, and conscription must come. That would change the character of the war entirely, and what was far worse the character of the nation. Men enslaved for war would be willing slaves in peace. And the Gladys Hancocks would rejoice. The Gladys Hancocks would abet such slavery with all the blood in their feeble little hearts. They would even have the vote very soon. That was inevitable, and they would use that vote for petty comfort, for the security of their own miniature domestic tyrannies, and for safe mediocrity. The Press would pander to them. They would turn England into the United States, or rather they would turn England into a second-rate imitation of the United States, importing into it all that was bad and little that was good of America. It was the spirit of myriads of Gladys Hancocks which had lost Suvla, the spirit of myriads of Gladys Hancocks brooding over this attempt to win the war in the grand style. Gladys Hancock thought it wasn't really wise to go to the Dardanelles at all. Gladys Hancock would think Mr Winston Churchill wasn't quite the kind of man who could be trusted. Gladys Hancock would have been shocked if the seniority of the Army List had been tampered with and junior fighting generals taken away from Sir John French to lead these new divisions. Gladys Hancock would have been relieved to hear that the Government had been strengthened by incorporating into it the leaders of the Opposition. Gladys Hancock would not be at all disturbed by the spoonfed news from France and Flanders where obviously an *impasse* on a far larger scale than anything out here had already been reached.

"Hullo, Ogilvie, you're looking very cheap."

It was Selward over from Imbros.

"I've got these damned trots. And I've been lying back thinking what a frightful thing the bromide of the suburban mind is. I say suburban, but as a matter of fact to be distinguishing the suburban mind now is

hardly worth while The whole country thinks with a suburban mind Is there any news of the offensive on the Western Front?"

"The usual news, old thing Here and there the gain of a yard at the price of a hundred men a yard "

"What's going to happen here?"

"We're all feeling pretty blue I think myself " Selward looked round the entrance of the dug-out "I think myself the General will be recalled "

"Not Sir Ian?"

Selward nodded gravely

"But I thought sending General Maude and General Byng and General Fanshawe out here might have meant business "

"Everybody seems to think it's too late The problem of winter is terrific Especially at Anzac Imagine what it will be like in the rains "

"There have been rumours here of attacks on the Asiatic side of the straits and also on Smyrna, but that may be backwash from the rumour we started before Suvla "

"My own belief," said Selward, "is that there'll be an attempt to help the Serbians in the hope of getting the Greeks in "

"What's that mean?"

"At French Headquarters they say Salonica "

"But suppose Greece doesn't come in? We should be violating neutrality "

"We've outgrown our earlier conceptions of neutrality The fact is, old thing, we're just beginning to understand that it's not going to be at all too easy to beat the Germans "

"But you don't think we ought to chuck the Dardanelles?"

"I don't But then we may be taking too close a view of the situation "

"I'll bet you the long view of history will decide we

threw away the British Empire on the night of August 6th," John declared "Oh, I don't mean we're going to sink down into a second-rate Power, I mean the prestige of the British Empire. However, perhaps the Navy will do something presently, and put our number up again."

"The Navy?" queried Selward, pursing his lips "Safety First is the motto of the people at home running the Navy."

"Damn it, Selward, you're just as pessimistic as I am. Have you got the trots too?"

"More or less. But look here, my lad, you're not going to stay at Anzac any longer. I promised old Wade not to kill you off. I'm going to send you down to Icaros to see friend Stern."

"I don't like leaving here when so many poor devils can't get away," John objected.

"Then the only alternative will be to put you on a hospital ship and push you off to Malta. And you know how difficult it will be to get back into the Aegean. You'd better do what I say. The *Bougainville* is leaving Helles the day after to-morrow and I'll get the French to give you a ride in her as despatch bearer from G H Q. I'm going on to Helles myself to-morrow morning and you can come with me."

So early next morning John packed up his Wolseley valise and his odds and ends of canvas furniture and his tin uniform case and his tin despatch-box and set foot on the beach at Anzac for the last time. He tried to get permission for his batman to accompany him, but when this was refused he felt pretty sure that he was never returning to Anzac.

"I wish you could come with me, Cargill."

"I'd like to run myself, and that's the truth," said Cargill, a grizzled, lined, and battered middle-aged Australian who had been wounded in the foot at the April

landing and still limped slightly "But I reckon we'll none of us last much longer at Anzac, and it wouldn't do for me to be joy-riding when my mates were packing up"

John thanked him for much kindness, but the thanks were waved aside

"Nothing to thank me for, Lieutenant All I'm glad is I can shake you by the hand when you're going instead of helping to carry you along under a blanket like what I did poor Lieutenant Gardiner "

"Perhaps when the war is over I'll come and visit Australia "

"Well, if you do, I'll show you some beaches a bit better than this bloody flywalk "

They shook hands

"I'm shaking hands with the finest lot of fellows I ever saw or am ever likely to see," John said His knees were groggy with the dysentery anyway, and the emotion of leaving this place made his whole body feel like cotton-wool It would have taken little to make him burst into tears

The trawler moved out of the cove John had his last glimpse of Shrapnel Gully steaming in the September heat, his last glimpse of the tawny cliffs riddled with human habitations, his last glimpse of the narrow sandy beach piled with stores along which men hurried to and fro under a perpetual threat of death, and as the trawler set her course southward his last glimpse of Hell Spit Presently from the olive-groves beyond Gaba Tepe a Turkish gun opened on them

"Very gentlemanly of them to give you a parting salute," said Selward as the shells made fountains all round them for fifty yards

The trawler zigzagged for awhile, and the shelling ceased The olive-grove whence it had come looked as peaceful as a Thames-side woodland A couple of hours later they were alongside the pier at Lancashire Landing

"I don't suppose you're up to a walk?" Selward asked

John had to admit reluctantly that he was afraid he'd have to lie down somewhere as handy as possible to a latrine

"I've got to walk over to French Headquarters at Sedd-el-bahr," said Selward "So I'll have to leave you in my working-tent You'll find comfortable not to say *de luxe* accommodation for your complaint about two minutes away "

No big shells came over from Asia that day John sat in Selward's working-tent in the hot smell of dust and canvas, listening to the click of the typewriters and swishing away the flies while he turned over back numbers of the illustrated papers The monotony was broken about every half-hour by a dragging walk through the sand to the *de luxe* accommodation which afforded a spacious view of the glassy sea He decided with relief that he probably would not be seasick in the *Bougainville*, which was a small armed despatch boat of about a couple of hundred tons and unpleasantly lively in the slightest sea

In the afternoon Selward came back with news that the *Bougainville* would sail about eight o'clock that evening Suddenly John noticed the gilt oakleaves round the peak of his cap, and the crown on his shoulder-straps

"Good lord, Selward, I didn't notice you'd been promoted "

Selward grinned

"I was waiting to be gazetted before I sported the new cap It was waiting here in cold storage I shall be one up on old Verney to-night when I get back to G H Q He received his brevet-majority at the same time, but he'll be lucky if he gets a new cap for another month "

"Best congratulations! I suppose you'll be a general before the war is over "

"One never knows," said Selward, with another grin

"Well, the Imbros trawler leaves at four You'd better

arrange with the N T O to get out to the *Bougainville*. Now don't chatter, old thing. I've got a spot of work to do before I go down to the pier."

John went back to the illustrated papers and the swishing of the flies with his horsehair whisk. The heat in the tent was stifling.

It was almost dark when John went on board the *Bougainville*, the captain of which, an elderly *capitaine de frigate*, with white hair and heavy white moustache and a large hooked nose, welcomed him almost effusively. John supposed that this was merely the charming French courtesy of a senior to a junior in the same service as himself until he was made aware that the cordiality of the welcome was not for the lieutenant of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve but the dramatist.

"I am enchanted, monsieur, enchanted to have a distinguished author as a passenger. We are all enchanted. As soon as we sail we are looking forward to giving you the best dinner we can manage."

John asked how the captain knew he was a dramatist, and was told that Major Selward had been good enough to inform him when they met at lunch in the General's mess at Sedd-el-bahr.

"And how well you speak French," he added.

John explained that he had had a great opportunity of practising his French when he was rehearsing with Gabrielle Derozier in a play of his in London.

"Gabrielle Derozier? Our Gabrielle Derozier? She has acted in a play of yours? What a pity we cannot give you a really good dinner! I am mortified that we have so little to offer you."

John protested that he would be powerless to enjoy the finest dinner in the world owing to his dysentery.

"A change of diet will cure your complaint. At least

you will eat without sand and without flies on board our little ship And now you will want to see your cabin Nothing very grand, but not too bad It's the best I can give you Gabrielle Derozier! My young men will be much excited when they hear who our guest is "

Captain Gaubert had led the way below and ushered him into a small cabin, the whiteness of which was exquisitely refreshing after the wearisome browns and yellows of the Peninsula Suddenly John caught sight of a bundle of clothes on the rack above his bunk

"But, *mon capitaine*," he asked anxiously, "isn't this your own cabin?"

"I use it when I am not on the bridge "

"But I couldn't dream of allowing you to turn out for me Please "

The old man (for by the electric light that was what John perceived him to be) gave a fierce tug at his big white moustache

"Your senior officer orders you to occupy this cabin," he announced, his pale blue eyes twinkling like the morning sea "*Non, mais, sans blague*, I should be desolated if you did not use my cabin Besides, I shall be on deck most of the night "

The noise of the anchor chain was heard John went up to take a last look at the Peninsula There was little to be seen in the darkness except the dull orange glow in the entrances of some of the dug-outs facing seaward, and here and there the wavering trail of a lantern, and northward over Anzac and Suvla the lightning of shell-fire across the dim sky

He was standing aft, gazing back while the *Bougainville* steamed southward

"You are not regretting Gallipoli?" Captain Gaubert asked, coming up from behind him

"I've a sort of a feeling I shall never see the Peninsula again "

"Have you enjoyed it so much that such a reflection saddens you?"

"It was an adventure," John replied "And every adventure which comes to an end makes one a little melancholy "

"Like a mistress from whom one parts," Captain Gaubert suggested

"Well yes, if you like "

"But there are plenty of adventures for you in the future, my friend, just as there are plenty of mistresses You are very young "

"Thirty-three next month Not so young, *mon capitaine* "

"You do not look even so much as that, and you have already tasted success! I find that is not bad I am nearly twice your age The greatest adventure before me is a fight with a submarine, and there are no more mistresses When the war is finished I shall grow melons That is not a great end to a life "

"I don't know about that It's not easy to grow the best melons "

"That is true I hope I shall succeed But à propos of melons I came to fetch you to dinner "

They went below to the ward-room

"Lieutenant de Vaisseau Queinac Enseigne de Vaisseau Payot Ingénieur-Lieutenant Rodier
alors à table," said Captain Gaubert, rubbing his hands in anticipation of the exceptional meal he had provided to honour their guest

John did not feel at all like eating the excellent food, and still less like drinking the admirable Bordeaux, but he had not the heart to thwart Captain Gaubert's hospitality, and vaguely wondering whether the amount he ate and drank was likely to prove fatal he did his utmost to bear himself worthily in the eyes of France

The two young naval officers were obviously impressed

by John's association with Gabrielle Derozier, and even the sharp-eyed thin-nosed sallow Lieutenant Rodier, a passenger like himself, and therefore at first inclined to be somewhat huffed at the respect and attention accorded to John, expanded after two or three glasses of wine and treated him as if he were as intelligent as a French officer of the Deuxième Bureau like himself

John asked him if he had heard anything of this rumoured proposal to occupy Salonica

"But it is already as good as accomplished," declared Rodier

"And what about Greek neutrality?"

The Intelligence officer laughed scornfully

"*A la guerre comme à la guerre* We have not time now to think about abstractions The Greeks must march It is our duty to teach them what they must do by every means we can take For example I am now on my way to violate Greek neutrality in the island of Icaros"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, there is a *sale type* of a Greek there who has the insolence to call himself the German Vice-Consul He has interfered with our service of *renseignements* in a most abominable way, and I am now on my way to arrest him with the help of Captain Gaubert"

"Are you going to occupy Icaros, *mon capitaine*?" John asked, with a smile

"*Ah ça, non!* I have my mails to think of"

"Then how will the arrest be effected?" John asked curiously

"*Tout simplement,*" Rodier replied "I shall land on the quay I shall ask to speak with this *sale type* Cavalaris I shall push him off the quay into the harbour He will be hauled up into the boat from which I have landed and taken on board the *Bourgainville* And if the Nomarch of Icaros protests against a violation of diplomatic privilege

it will be maintained that this *sale type* was arrested on the high seas *Alors, vous voyez, c'est tout simple* "

John admitted that the operation as sketched out beforehand by Lieutenant Rodier did sound quite simple, but he did not believe it would be carried through. He supposed that Rodier was being pot-valiant, and he was extremely astonished when after he had stepped ashore and was being welcomed by Emil there was an excited murmur further along the quay, a splash, and a murmur that rose to a shout as the dripping form of Themistocles Cavalaris, the German Vice-Consul at Icaros, was hauled on board the cutter and rowed off to the *Bougainville* lying out in the harbour.

"Good lord!" Emil exclaimed "What on earth will the French do next?"

John defended the action of the French when he dined with Emil and Joe Hoggart that evening, and the old licorice-grower took his side in the argument.

"War's war, Mr Stern," he said "That's right, isn't it, Mr Ogilvie? War's war. Cavalaris has been a nuisance to us for nearly a year. The French have found a way to deal with him. Good luck to them, I say."

He raised his glass of sweetish Icarian.

"War may be war," Emil declared "But we must preserve the outward decencies, and it's not decent to kidnap the consular representative of an enemy power from a neutral port. Once we admit the right to infringe diplomatic immunity, where shall we stop?"

"But by occupying Mudros and Mytilene, and now by landing in Salonica, we've said good-bye to the conventions out here," John argued "What's the use of straining at gnats now? The French realize we're fighting for our existence. You might as well tell a man who's attacked by a couple of apaches that he must fight according to Queensberry rules."

"That's right, Mr Ogilvie," Joe Hoggart put in "I'm

always preaching to Mr Stern that he's too dainty in the way he goes about things He'll get no thanks for it in the long run, you mark my words War's war anywhere, but out here it's a bit more war than anywhere else "

"You're both wrong," Emil contradicted "We shall go to pieces morally if we fling away all the petty decencies of international usage It's not worth winning this war if we have to turn ourselves into Germans to do it "

"But you used to be so realistic, Emil," John pointed out "I do not understand why you attach so much importance to the outward expression of diplomatic etiquette Has Cavalaris impeded your work in Icaros ?"

"Very much so," Joe Hoggart insisted

"Not so much as the French will impede it," Emil snapped, "when they develop their intelligence service at Icaros to which, I presume, this elimination of Cavalaris is the prelude "

"Ah, that's what's really annoying you!" John laughed

"And I have telegraphed accordingly to Athens," Emil went on "I have telegraphed to the Minister a protest in my consular capacity, and I have telegraphed to Manners that if the French are allowed to develop Icaros as a base for Intelligence we might as well sell the *Samaena* and pack up I've got a good show working now, and I'm not going to have the lives of all our friends endangered to gratify French vanity and jealousy Blasted nation! I hate them That fellow Rodier has been here before and done enough damage already "

"But Cavalaris was a great nuisance to us, Mr Stern," Joe Hoggart insisted

"He made us extra careful, but he did us no real damage In fact he was useful really, because we could always use him when we wanted to get the Turks to keep a look out at the wrong place and seize the wrong cargo "

A night or so after this when John was already feeling

much better, but not yet fit enough to share in one of those nocturnal expeditions to land or take off from the mainland agents and messengers, two Greeks reached the Consulate while Emil and Joe were away. One of them was haggard and thin, wearing a suit of rags. The other was plump and dressed in neat black, the last kind of figure one would expect to see landing from a smuggler's craft. Withers told John that if he liked he could try his hand at examining them both for useful information.

"I think you know me, Mr. Queethers," said the plump arrival in Greek. "I came to the British Consulate once to ask your advice."

"I dare say you did," Withers replied contemptuously. "But that doesn't say I know you."

"Which one shall I tackle first?" asked John, who could not help feeling excited at the prospect of a little espionage at last after the rather monotonous routine of counter-espionage at Gallipoli.

"You had better tackle this fellow," Withers suggested. "The other looks as if he could do with a feed. I'll give him something to eat."

So John settled down under the eyes of that elongated lion and elongated unicorn on the escutcheon to examine the plump arrival.

"Name?"

"Aristides Toulombatsopoulos."

"Wait a moment."

"Son of Alcibiades."

"Wait a moment."

"I speak you in English, yes, please, I think?" Aristides Toulombatsopoulos.

"I don't want to speak English, I can perfectly well follow you in Greek," John snapped. "I just want time to write down this rather long name."

"Very good name," said Aristides proudly, but in-

sisting now on showing off his English "My father Mr Alcibiades very famous good man in Mileto "

"Oh, you come from Mileto?"

"Yes, sare, I am good Greek man from Mileto I come here with peril to speak you many useful things I come here because I love much the glorious British and the glorious French Oh yes, sare "

Aristides put a podgy hand on his heart and bowed low Then he lowered his voice to a raucous whisper

"And I think the glorious British army and the glorious French army come soon to take Mileto from the goddam Turks and the bloody goddam Germans Yes, no, yes?"

"Oh, you think the British and French intend to attack Mileto?"

"That is how the little word goes in Mileto now, sare And when I hear that little word, I say it is for the duty to Aristides Toulombatsofopoulos that he must come to speak the British Consul how he can speak the glorious British army and the glorious French how they can do when they come to Mileto "

"I wish you'd talk in Greek," John sighed irritably "I should understand you much better in your own language "

Aristides son of Alcibiades made a profound obeisance, but continued to speak English

"There are many bad mens in Mileto, captain," he declared "Many bad mens who do not love the glorious British and the glorious French like I am loving them And these bad mens are a much danger because they are loving the goddam Turks and the bloody goddam Germans So when the glorious British and the glorious French are come into Mileto with their army all these bad mens can be put in prison and shotted They are too bad for live They must all be shotted And I have spoke myself that I come to speak the jolly nice British Consul how he can give a list of these bad mens to the

army for shotting Yes, no, yes? Very quick, I think, is better "

"Oh, you wish to give us a list of the leading pro-Germans in Mileto, is that it?" John asked

"Yes, captain, you understand me very well indeed Oh, I am so pleased," and beaming, the plump Aristides produced from under his pants, after a good deal of puffing, a sheet of paper which he offered to John, who looked through a list of names

"And these are the chief supporters of the Germans in Mileto?" he asked

"These are all bad mens who must be shotted very quick because they are a much danger," Aristides declared, assuming an extremely grave expression

"But all the men on this list are bakers or confectioners or both," John observed in Greek

"Yes, all breadmakers and zacharoplasts," Aristides agreed

"And what is your business?"

"I am breadmaker and zacharoplast I make very good breads, very good sugars "

"Well, thank you I'll keep this list for when it is needed "

"And you will speak for shot all these dirty dogs?" Aristides demanded eagerly

"I should think they'd all be dead within an hour of the landing of the Allied Army "

"Oh, thank you, sare Oh, I am very pleased And you will come to my shop, sare? Yes, no, yes? I think, please, yes, for me to give you many very good sugars When will come to Mileto the glorious British and the glorious French?"

"They might land there any day now," John replied

"Oh, I am so happy, captain Good-bye, sare, good-bye Aristides Toulombatsopoulos son of Alcibiades My shop is by the harbour "

The plump little confectioner bowed himself out, all smiles. The danger and discomfort of crossing to Icaros in a smuggler's caique had been great. But the results had been worth danger and discomfort. He could now make his way back to Mileto, secure that when the Allied army landed his rivals would be lined up against a wall and that he would be the only baker and confectioner left in the city.

"I didn't recognize the blighter myself," said Withers, "but Condo knew him all right. Well, he'll probably get shot himself, because for a cert he won't be able to keep from bragging about what he's done and then he'll be properly for it with the Turks. And now you'd better see this other chap. He says he's made his way to the coast after deserting from the Turkish army somewhere beyond Angora. He seems a straightforward fellow by the way he talks. Six weeks he's been on the road, and it's a miracle how he got away safely."

Spiridon Xyndas turned out also to be a native of Mileto, but there any likeness to the ambitious confectioner vanished. He was a young man in his early twenties, the fineness of whose classic profile had been enhanced by the privations of his dangerous journey across Anatolia and whose natural dignity and grace the miserable rags he was wearing could not spoil. His clear cold grey eyes that recalled sea-water in a granite pool gazed directly at his interrogator and the answers from those thin lips which the fair moustache could not hide were straight and spare as the man himself.

John had been questioning him for about an hour about his desperate walk toward the sea and freedom before he displayed a touch of emotion. Then he happened to speak of cutting the throat of a Turkish sentry near Magnesia, and his voice faltered for a moment.

"Oh, but you needn't reproach yourself for that," said John. "It was his life or yours."

The eyebrows of Spiridon Xyndas met

"Do you think I was reproaching myself for the death of that dog?" he asked "No, I was cursing myself for the easy death I had to give him I whose father was shot, whose mother's womb was ripped up by a knife, whose little brother was spitted on a bayonet, whose two beautiful young sisters were dragged off to the interior to serve the lust of these Turkish dogs But, glory be to God, there are still Turkish dogs to kill, and they shall not die so easily They say Venizelos will lead the Hellenes to victory It is for that I have escaped from the Turkish army from beyond Angora It is to fight for Hellas "

"They say King Constantine refuses to let Venizelos lead the Hellenes to victory," John told him

"Those who say so are liars No King of the Hellenes could be as base as that Had I thought such a thing I would have mutilated that dog of a Turkish sentry, choked him with his own —, and killed myself before they took me "

It was just then that Emil came in about three o'clock in the morning, wet through, for the sea had risen and the *Samaena* had shipped a good deal of water He looked at the notes John had made from his examination of the deserter, and then without bothering to change his wet clothes sat down immediately and began to question the man himself To all his questions about guns, fortifications, dispositions of troops, British prisoners of war working on the Baghdad railway, stores, ammunition dumps, Spiridon Xyndas responded eagerly

John, while admiring the thoroughness of Emil's questioning and the way he followed every kilometre of the deserter's six weeks' journey from the interior and along the coast from near Smyrna as far as the cove just north of Mileto where he happened to hit on the smuggler's caïque, could not keep back a slight mortification over the immense superiority of Emil's method of questioning to

his own. The thoroughness of it all bewitched him. He sat listening until the rays of the sun were streaming into the arched room and irradiating the escutcheon of the Royal Arms above the desk at which Emil sat, careless of wet clothes or fatigue, to extract from Spiridon Xyndas as complete a picture of the interior of Anatolia as he could give. The man had been a super-observer with a superb memory, the accuracy and certainty of his facts were marvellous. Nevertheless, John had to recognize that he himself was as yet quite incapable of making the most of such a subject. The first feeling of pique had vanished in an emotion of profound admiration for the competence of his friend. No wonder Captain Wade called him the best man he had in this part of the world.

At last Emil stopped.

"You'd better go and sleep," he told Spiridon Xyndas. "Your information has been good. What do you want to do now?"

"I want to fight in the Greek army."

"You want to go to the Piræus?"

"As soon as possible."

"But you may be disappointed. King Constantine refuses to let Venizelos declare war."

"Then I shall kill him," said Spiridon Xyndas.

"You're tired. We'll talk about your future later on when you're rested," Emil told him.

The deserter saluted and withdrew.

"That's a man," said Emil. "The finest information I've had since I left Mileto. And in case Manners monkeys with my telegram to suit his own damned information, I'll send the whole report over his head by bag direct to the Foreign Office for Wade."

"Well, you'd better follow the advice you gave to Spiridon and go and get a bit of sleep yourself," John said.

"And what about you? This is a fine hour for a man

recovering from dysentery to be sitting up Get off to bed, John I'm going to have some coffee and write out my telegram It will take Withers all day to encode it "

"But look here," John protested "You really ought to rest yourself for an hour or two You've been asking questions and making notes for five hours after being out all night and getting wet through before that "

"My dear John, that kind of thing biases me How often do you think I get a subject like our determined friend? Why, that telegram will cost us £30 to send from here to Athens and it will cost them £150 to send it from Athens to London And there will not be a single word in it that can be spared Meat, meat All of it meat My God, what a fellow! Not a regimental number did he fail to notice He could even give the regimental number of the sentry whose throat he slit by Magnesia, and there would have been some excuse for missing that But he struck a match and looked for it I could have kissed him The mental exhilaration of examining a man like that is tremendous!"

"I had him for an hour before you came back," said John, looking ruefully at his own notes "But I couldn't handle him like you "

"You haven't had as much practice as I have, and though you've got on wonderfully well with your Greek you still have to give half your mind to thinking about that "

The picture of Emil sitting damp and dishevelled in that white vaulted room of Icaros, the sunlight streaming in upon him and the absurd elongated lion and unicorn above his head, would displace for a long time all previous pictures of Emil in his mind, pictures that went back to boyhood some of them He was white with exhausted vitality, but his dark eyes, ringed though they were, blazed with an almost ferocious intellectual exultation A lock of hair had fallen over his forehead, and that with the crumpled state of his clothes gave him a Bohemian

look foreign to his usual neatness. The redness of his lips against the pallor of his face not even that black moustache on which the salt had dried in crystals could mask.

"I believe all your emotion has gone into your head," John observed.

"All of it, I'm glad to say," Emil asseverated emphatically.

"You never think of anybody? Neither of woman nor boy nowadays?" John asked.

"Come out to Anatolia and let myself think of women or boys?" Emil exclaimed. "Do you think I want to rot in the sun?"

"Still yours must have been a lonely life in most ways. Not now, of course, because you've plenty to do, but before."

"Before? Good God, do you think I wasn't better occupied in excavating round Mileto than in this waste of energy on destruction?"

"But you are enjoying this war?" John pressed.

"Not at all. I enjoy getting results. My work is not profitable work for the world. But it has to be done well, and in this time of worldwide madness there is no opportunity to do any work which is profitable. Perhaps if I had left the Service before the war I might have — but no, a fever must take its course. When the fever dies down, that will be time enough to make the best of the world's convalescence."

"I've often meant to ask you about your emotional life," said John. "But you were rather remote when I stayed with you in Mileto last year. Last year? It seems a century ago. However, I can appreciate your independence of emotion. I have been so exquisitely free from it for a long time now, and there's no doubt that if one can get satisfying action falling in love is a fearful waste of mental energy. The only thing that's bothering me is

that I feel I shall never want to go back to writing. Living is so much more enjoyable. Yet when this war does end it will be extremely difficult to live up to the intensity of experience it has revealed."

"I don't agree with you at all," said Emil. "I think this war is an atrocious waste of time."

"Not when you've subjects like Spiridon Xyndas."

"Do go to bed, John, and don't chatter any more. I must get to work on this telegram."

Withers came into the office at this moment.

"Good lord, haven't you two been to bed?"

"You'll be lucky if you get to bed for some time, Withers. I'll have a six-thousand-word telegram for you to encode by this afternoon, and not less than four hundred words to spell out in groups of anything up to twelve. Oh, do go to bed, John," he added fretfully.

Withers settled himself at his desk. As John went out of the office, he heard him whistling between his yellowish teeth.

*"I do like to be beside the seaside,
I do like to be beside the sea."*

He looked round. Emil was already deep in the composition of his long telegram.

It was on the afternoon of this arduous morning that John, calling upon the wife of the doctor who had been attending on him since he came to Icaros, met Theodore Ladas, by whose personality he was at once fascinated.

Theodore Ladas lived on the island of Lipsia in the middle of the Cyclades, but he had a house in Icaros also and owned a considerable amount of property there, mostly the best tobacco-growing land. He had spent much of his earlier life in England, including three years at Oxford, was a member of a great Anglo-Greek banking

house with interests in Egypt and India, and had been one of the first and most fervid supporters of Venizelos. He was now something over sixty, six feet three inches tall with a figure as lithe and slim as a man of half his age, a nose like a hawk's beak, a pointed iron-grey Vandyck beard and a full head of iron-grey wavy hair.

"So you've just come down from Gallipoli," he said to John. "By Jove, you're a lucky man to have been there! We should have been there too, eh, Doctor?"

Little Doctor Axelos adjusted his gold pince-nez, and pressed his palms together in the conventional Mediterranean gesture of polite protest.

"I think I would rather have been excused, Mr Ladas."

"Oh, I don't mean you and I in person, Doctor. I suppose we have to admit we're too old a pair of birds for that kind of thing. I mean our army."

"But as events have turned out, Mr Ladas, perhaps the King was wise to be cautious," the Doctor suggested.

"Nonsense! Abominable nonsense!" Ladas exclaimed in his ringing bass. "Had we come forward last March as Mr Venizelos wanted we should have been in Constantinople by now."

"But I understood the Russians would not agree to our entering Constantinople. That is what the Nomarch tells me."

"The Nomarch! Can't think why Mr Venizelos hasn't cleared that miserable little rat out of Icaros," Ladas declared. "I wrote and told him he was an open scandal, but here he is still. The little rat!"

Mrs Axelos shook a finger over the coffee-pot, and Mrs Edwards, the Greek wife of the archaeologist and editor of *Athenæus* who had retired from any contact with humanity in disgust at the interruption to his work caused by war, told the fire-eater in her tinny English that Mr Despozitos had been extremely kind and

helpful to her and that anyway Greece did not want to do any more fighting at present

"You'll sing a different tune, Mrs Edwards," Ladas prophesied, "when the Turks have seized your father's farm "

"I have heard word from him and he is having no difficulty at all with the Turks," she responded tartly "I wish I were as well off in Icaros But my husband gets more difficult every day "

Mrs Axelos tried to introduce a fresh topic, for once Mrs Edwards began on her domestic grievances general conversation became impossible It was no use, however, Mrs Edwards continued to whine away in her tinny accents about the hardships of her lot, married to an old man who would not even allow her enough money to run her house properly

Everybody was embarrassed and irritated, and presently Theodore Ladas rose

"Well, Doctor, I've a good bit of business to see about before I go back to Lipsia " Then he turned to John "Would you care for a short drive? We have still an hour of daylight "

When they were in one of those battered old Fords that seemed the only cars able to negotiate the island roads Ladas said he couldn't have stood much more of that woman

"I should like to meet Edwards himself "

"He used to be a charming fellow But he's quite dotty now Any sense he had left after his work was interrupted has been driven out of him by that wife of his Poisonous woman! Poisonous! And we have too many of them "

They were driving past the house of the Nomarch who was just coming out of his gate attended by a couple of subservient minor officials He raised his hat to Ladas with an excessive bow

"Little rat!" muttered Ladas, lifting his own hat half an inch from his fine brow "I really must write to Venizelos again and urge his removal He'd hand over Icaros to Germany to-morrow if he could "

"Not much chance of that," John laughed

"Not much chance perhaps of handing over Icaros, but take it from me we have a very strong pro-German party in the army You see, they don't want a Great Hellas in Athens They would even let Mytilene and Chios and the rest of the Asiatic islands go back to Turkey to-morrow You remember—at any rate you remember reading about the war of 1897 Well, there was Old Greece The last Balkan War added a New Greece, and the Athenian clique hate us They can't bear the idea of being run by Island and Anatolian and Thracian Greeks They're quite content with a little tinpot Balkan Court They feel they would be lost in Constantinople I'll tell you what If you can imagine England being run entirely by Colonials, that's how they feel about us in Athens Even if the Athens clique were sure the Entente would win they'd be no more anxious to fight They don't want the responsibility of a Great Greece They find it sweeter to stew in their own juice Even in the Cyclades where I live most of the time they look upon me as a Jingo Now I'm not advocating conquest and the annexation of other people's territory What I believe is that with Great Britain's benevolence we can make the Eastern Mediterranean a Greek lake, and that will mean a British lake, because we shall require the naval might of Great Britain to protect our lake We don't want the French We want the Italians still less And mark you, the Italians have some grand ideas about expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean That's what they came into the war for That's why they're holding on to Rhodes "

"What about the Russians?" John asked

"Well, I suppose it will be difficult to keep them out of Constantinople, but one never knows. However, with Smyrna and Miletos and the whole coast of Anatolia, and with Rhodes and Cyprus, we should have a great deal. And the Russians may not be strong enough to seize Constantinople against the will of Great Britain. Constantinople might become a free port and the Dardanelles internationalized."

"Glorious dreams!" John commented. "But meanwhile we're only just managing to cling on to three toes of the Gallipoli Peninsula. And now there seems a chance of giving up even those three toes and concentrating on Salonica."

Next day the news reached Icaros that Mr Venizelos had resigned.

Ladas came round to the Consulate and vowed that if another French ship came into the harbour he would throw the Nomarch over the quay and get him shipped off like the late vice-consul of Germany.

"But what I really wanted to suggest," he went on, "is that you, Ogilvie, should come and stay with me for as long as you can in Lipsia. It will do you good, and it will do me good to have somebody to whom I can let off steam. My boy Leonidas will be with his regiment, but my two girls will keep you amused, and, though I say it, I think you'll find our place very attractive."

John looked at Emil. The invitation was tempting.

"You certainly ought to go," Emil declared.

"But these civilian clothes of mine..." John demurred.

"Rubbish!" Ladas bellowed. "We can fit you out from Leo's wardrobe."

"I'll have to telegraph to Selward and to London," John said.

"We can manage that," Emil told him. "Withers has

a passion for telegrams They won't know where Lipsia is, anyway "

"Come, come, don't be too scathing," Ladas roared genially "We consider ourselves the capital of the Cyclades "

"I don't suppose they even know where the Cyclades are," Emil added

From Selward came the single word '*Concur*'

From London came '*Approve Lieutenant Ogilvie going to Lipsia on sick leave He should await instructions there*' "

So on one of those days in earliest October when the Aegean is entranced John sailed with Theodore Ladas to Lipsia and arrived there when the sunset incarnadined the white houses round the quay and the white houses that covered the conical hills behind, and the wreath of encircling islands was rosy violet

"Phœbus Apollo, how lovely!" John exclaimed

"It is beautiful, isn't it? Andros, Tenos, Myconos, Delos, Naxos, Paros "

"Delos, Naxos, Paros," John sighed "Leto, Apollo, Artemis, Theseus, Ariadne, Dionysos, and Parian marble It can't be true "

"Jolly harbour, isn't it? The best except for the Piræus itself And this port was made by refugees from the massacre of Chios Curious place That hill is Roman Catholic Remains of the Venetian occupation The other hill is Orthodox A cathedral on the top of each We live on the other side of the island Hullo, there's my eldest girl Euphrosyne Hullo, darling, where's Aglaia? This is Mr Ogilvie What's that? Leo's here? But what the devil "

"Now don't get excited, father He had a fall from his horse and broke his ankle, and they let him come home until he can ride again "

Euphrosyne Ladas turned to welcome the guest He saw a tall girl with a black cloud of hair, an ivory com-

plexion, and a profile that Praxiteles need not have idealized

"Oh well, I'm sorry the boy's hurt himself," the father said, "but I'm glad he'll be here to help to entertain Mr Ogilvie. Anyway, these damned Gounarists don't intend to march with the Entente. He's missing nothing except the disgrace of standing at ease while our ally Serbia is being overrun by the enemy."

"I knew you'd arrive in a rage," Euphrosyne laughed. "Aglaia declared the boat would travel under your steam."

"The minx! But where's the car? Where the devil is that confounded"

"It's just coming now. What a noise you do make, father!"

A large Daimler landaulette stopped on the quayside, and they all got in. John noticed a fine square paved with marble, in the centre of which was a bandstand, a general air of prosperity, and the double-headed eagle of Austria on its yellow field above what was evidently the Austrian Consulate.

"Ah, you may well stare, Ogilvie," said Theodore Ladas. "The whole lot should have been out of here the day Great Britain declared war on Germany."

Beyond the town the road ran undulating between vineyards and olive-groves for fifteen miles to the other side of the island. As they descended the south-westerly slope another wreath of islands appeared grape-dark in the gathering dusk above a shimmering pearl-blue sea.

"Cythnos, Seriphos, Siphnos, Antiparos, and Paros again," said Ladas.

John could only remember Danae and the infant Perseus coming ashore on Seriphos in the chest to be rescued by Dictys, the kindly fisherman, but that was a vivid enough classic memory on which to feed his imagination.

The car turned off from the main road, and entered a

deeper dusk between an avenue of gnarled holm-oaks until in about half a mile it came to gates of wrought iron between two Doric columns of marble. An old man in a bedraggled fustanella opened the gate, and they drove on toward a large white house with a wide space of roof in a series of shallow cupolas.

"Grazia di Dio, as our house is called, was built by some Venetian noble in the early part of the seventeenth century. It's just about three hundred years old. Grazia, as it's usually called for short, came into my dear wife's family when the Venetians left. I wish she were still here to make you welcome, but" Theodore Ladas broke off.

John knew already that he had been a widower since his children were small, but he divined that his host never came back like this to his house in the company of a guest without a fresh sharpness of regret that she through whom Grazia had become his was no longer alive to welcome that guest.

"There's just time to show you something of the view before it's quite dusk," he said to John, leading the way through a great vaulted hall to a drawing-room already lighted up, and thence out to a large loggia from the parapet of which one looked down two hundred feet of cliff upon an orange-grove, a crescent of sandy shore beyond, and the sea, smoke-blue now and still to-night as a coverlet of silk.

"But it's not fair to show you the view as late as this. To-morrow, however. Where's Leo? Where's Aglaia?"

His bass rang out through the silence, and reminded John that he was not in fairyland.

Leonidas and Aglaia now appeared. The young cavalry officer had the same impulsive manner as his father, to which was added a handshake of such strength that John felt the bones of his own hand were cracking. He was not so tall as his father and his nose like Euphrosyne's was

classically straight. It was his younger sister Aglaia who had inherited her father's beak. She was no more than sixteen or seventeen now, but in another twenty years that nose which as yet merely lent an agreeable aristocratic distinction to her countenance would probably have developed into a too prominent feature. She was a charming and vivacious girl, liable to fall into sudden moods of remoteness, when her dark eyes glowed sombrely and mystery enshrouded her.

"You lucky chap," exclaimed Leo to John. "You've been up at the Dardanelles. And I did not have my commission in time to see active service in our last war. I was in garrison all the time."

"And what's the feeling in the army now?" his father asked.

Leo shook his head.

"I'm afraid the majority of officers—at any rate in the cavalry—think the King is right and Venizelos wrong. I was really quite glad I damaged my ankle, so as to get away for a while from the whole humiliating business."

"Humiliating?" Yes, that's the word, damned humiliating," his father affirmed.

"Shameful!" Ephrosyne added, with an emphasis that was almost frightening.

For the rest of the evening Leo pressed John for tales of Gallipoli, which he related a little unwillingly, for as he kept reminding his hosts three months on the beach at Anzac did not entitle him to consider that he had played a proper part in the campaign.

The next morning, standing on the terrace outside his bedroom and looking across to blue islands beyond the circlet already beheld, he decided that *Grazia di Dio* had the loveliest site of any house he had seen. Wooded ground rose behind, and on either side the cliffs incurved like the horns of a huge bull round the small cove two hundred feet below, the water of which was

smooth and green as jade and lapped a crescent of yellow sand, level with which as in Botticelli's picture of Venus rising from the sea was the orange-grove, whose treetops seemed to invite one to float down through this pellucid air and land upon them unharmed

Breakfast was an English meal at Grazia. At first John supposed this display of eggs and bacon and kedgeree and kidneys was in his honour, but he soon found that it was the rule in the house of Theodore Ladas, who evidently believed that the large English breakfast played an important part in the development of the more sterling qualities of the English character.

"I always maintain that no nation which doesn't eat a good breakfast gets anywhere," he avowed. "Now, what's the programme for to-day? We mustn't make you overdo it yet, Ogilvie. This is to be a rest for you. What about climbing up Mt Elias? You can see every island in the Cyclades from the top, and it's a gloriously clear day."

"Father, I think that's a very bad suggestion," Euphrosyne protested. "If Mr Ogilvie has been ill he won't want to scramble up Mt Elias. It's much too tiring an expedition for him yet."

"I thought we'd make Costa take our lunch up for us. We'd have a good rest at the top."

Euphrosyne was firm.

"No, it's a terribly long pull."

"I'll tell you what I should like to do," said John. "And that is to go down the cliff and explore that orange-grove."

"Oh, good lord," Theodore Ladas exclaimed in consternation, "that's in the garden!"

"I can't get even as far as that," said Leo ruefully.

"Look here, father, you go and be energetic somewhere by yourself," Euphrosyne suggested. "And Aglaia shall keep Leo amused, and I'll take Mr Ogilvie to see the *portokallon*."

The path down the cliff was wide enough for two to walk abreast and zigzagged so frequently that it was nowhere very steep. Here and there where a jutting rock offered a foundation tiled gazebos had been built which shaded by cypresses or pines offered such resting-places as the Mediterranean loves to offer its worshippers. At the foot of the arbutus and lentisk bushes white cyclamens were growing. In grassy nooks a pale lavender crocus with stamens bright as fire spread its petals to the sun, and the tips of the sun-dried spurges growing from the rocks were breaking into vivid green stars.

"Autumn is really Spring here," John murmured, in delight at all this beauty.

"Oh, we can have a very fierce Winter before Spring," Euphrosyne assured him.

Down they went, resting at each gazebo to look over the parapet, from the crevices of which small grey aloes and house leeks sprouted, at the green waters of the cove and the sea beyond across whose silvery expanse the October sun was shining with the warmth of May, or to look back at the old white house of Grazia di Dio above the sheer cliff where nothing grew except rosemary spreading its fans upon the face of the rock for protection against the south winds—Notos and Lips.

"Lipsia," John murmured. "The island of the south wind, I suppose. Let me see, what's the south wind in modern Greek?"

"*Nota* we call it. And can't it blow here! But as you see Grazia is protected against every other wind."

"It's strange I should come to Lipsia," John said.

"Why?"

"Oh, it's a fancy I had to divide my life into the four winds."

"Indeed? And which is blowing now?"

"The south wind. That's why I said it was strange I

should have come to Lipsia I've a feeling that this place will be influential over my life "

"Why, I am so glad to hear that," Euphrosyne told him, with a light smile

"And yet in a week or perhaps less I shall get instructions to report somewhere and probably never see Lipsia again "

They had reached an iron gate at the foot of the cliff path and passing through it they entered the orange-grove

"I wish you could see this place in Spring," Euphrosyne said, "when the ground is covered with all kinds of flowers "

Their footsteps moved silently over the pale grass that was beginning to shoot from the dark soil stained with the pervading green to crackle sometimes on the dry fallen leaves that when crushed still exhaled a delicate fragrance

"It's lovely enough now," he replied

Lovely indeed it was, this verdurous twilight beyond which through a colonnade of slim smooth trunks appeared a crescent of yellow sand lapped by the bright Aegean that thus beheld was drawn imperceptibly up into the sky

"In another week or so we shall protect the oranges with a shelter against the winter wind," Euphrosyne told him, "and then we shall not have this view "

When they reached the edge of the grove they sat on the sand beside the sea, the faint breath of which was all that broke the silence

"To think that hardly a fortnight ago I was on the beach at Anzac!"

"That must have been a horrible strain "

"One got used to it But, do you know, sitting here, I'm suddenly realizing that I shouldn't like to go back I'd be afraid I wasn't at all afraid when I was there,

but now I would be One forgets in a place like that there are places where shrapnel doesn't burst at any moment, but now I really don't believe I could face it again I mean, of course if I had to I would But undoubtedly I'd be frightened "

"Yet even here one can be frightened," she told him

"Of what?" he asked "Of some sea-monster such as came to devour Andromeda?"

"I will tell you something In August last year I came to bathe here as we often do in summer Oh, it was such a hot day! I couldn't bear to leave the shade of the oranges and I sat down with my back to one of them, not minding a bit how the green was coming off the trunk on my white dress It was as quiet as it is now, and I took out my little notebook and began to make up some poetry"

"You write poetry?"

"Oh, just to amuse myself That's nothing But I was so much concentrated that I became lost to everything except my foolish little poem And suddenly I heard a frightful noise come roaring round the cliff and two enormous grey shapes appeared, sweeping across the sea The whole ground seemed to shake, and a green orange fell with a plump on my head I just let out one shriek, and I ran for my life back through the gate and up the cliff path until I saw that what had frightened me so were two great battleships But perhaps I was right to be frightened Do you know what ships they were? The *Goeben* and the *Breslau* steaming north toward the Dardanelles And I think they cut their way through the heart of Hellas that day, for not since have we been a united nation "

"Terrifically dramatic of course," John exclaimed in awe

"They were so close From the point of the cliff you could throw a pebble on board And such a noise "

"You ought to have written a poem about that "

"I did write one later "

"Will you show it to me ?"

"I never show my poems to anybody," she said firmly

He looked round at her Her dark eyes were gazing farther, oh, much farther than the farthest cloudy island shape on the ultimate horizon, and for a moment they were troubled, losing their brightness like a pool stirred by a faint wind, but the serenity of her exquisite pale face was not disturbed She was still as marble No sculptured Ariadne was more still It occurred to John that he could fall in love with this beautiful girl, but in the very instant of the thought's taking shape he crushed it out of shape This was no time for falling in love Picking up a small piece of driftwood, he flung it out upon the jade-green water of the cove It was as if Eros had aimed a shaft which missed him, and he had picked up the harmless arrow and tossed it from him

"Ah, yes!" he ejaculated

"What?" she turned slowly from that invisible horizon of hers to ask

"I was thinking of Botticelli's Primavera when Eros shoots his arrow from the orange-grove at one of the Graces "

"I know," said Euphrosyne "As she looks at Hermes "

John blushed hotly He had suddenly remembered that one of the Graces was Euphrosyne What an ass he was!

"I'd forgotten about Euphrosyne," he stammered, blushing a yet fiercer red

"Oh, how you're blushing," she laughed, and her eyes danced with enjoyment of his discomfiture

"It was such an idiotic thing to say "

"I didn't take it as a proposal of marriage," she assured him "Oh dear, now you've made me laugh, and I wasn't feeling at all like laughter this morning I wish you knew

what it means, Mr Ogilvie, to long with all your heart for your country to take the right road and to watch her hesitate and step back "

"I know what it felt like for awhile when we wondered if we were going to let France down, and I think we would have let France down if the Germans hadn't marched into Belgium That's why I hate this Salonica business It seems to me pretty awful to have gone to war for a principle and then go back on that principle "

"Do you really think that?" she asked him gravely, and as she spoke he realized that he had been uttering a counterfeit of noble sentiment like some windbag of a party politician whose rhetoric can be anticipated as a claptrap tune can be hummed in the course of being heard for the first time

"No, I'm not sure that I do In fact I don't think it What I really think is that we're in this war to the neck and that we can't afford any longer to bother about principles Anyway, Salonica isn't on a par with Belgium After all, you are not resisting, and I suppose there has been some diplomatic arrangement "

"I would have more respect for the military clique which is dishonouring Greece if they did resist," she declared passionately "As it is we are the mock of Europe What would Byron sing of Hellas to-day? Oh, it is shameful! It is ignominious!"

And plunging her pale proud face into her hands she burst into a passion of weeping

For many months in moments of black depression about the course of the war John would evoke the vision of that beautiful girl weeping for her country beside the Aegean on that October morning, and behold the serried trunks of the orange-trees and the fruit in the dark glossy foliage, green and bitter as the water in the bay, bitter as the tears of Euphrosyne Like some great picture the evocation would express a permanent and essential truth

so that whatever doubts came to him he would turn to it for reassurance and be once more convinced that what he was doing was worth doing because it accorded with that vision of Euphrosyne. He did not fall in love with her that morning. He fell in love with Hellas.

And it was in a mood of something like exaltation that he went down to the British Consulate ten days later to receive this message from Warwick, the kindly bearded Consul who was also head of the Eastern Telegraph Company's station in Lipsia:

Please instruct Lieutenant Ogilvie health permitting to come immediately to Athens and call on Captain Spicer's representative at the address he knows

"This comes from the Legation," said Warwick, ruffling his shaggy hair and twinkling at John. "I suppose you know what you have to do?"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, I'm glad you looked in on me last week," said Warwick, "because I shouldn't have known otherwise who on the wide earth Lieutenant Ogilvie was."

The *Artemisia* sailed from Lipsia at midnight. All the Ladas family drove in to see their guest off. Leo had been expecting to accompany him to the Piræus, but his father's energy had tempted him too hardly and his ankle had been judged by the doctor to require another week's strict rest. So John travelled alone, and as the little Greek steamer set her course westward and passed close on the other side of the long mole of the harbour he heard the bass of Theodore Ladas ring out through the tranquil night.

"Mind you come back as soon as you can. Send a telegram, and we'll meet you with the car."

And, as the steamer swept on out of communication

with those left standing at the end of the mole John felt curiously positive that this was not the last time he should see the island of Lipsia

He disembarked at the Piræus about eight o'clock next morning, and after taking a room at the Grande Bretagne Hotel on the advice of Leo Ladas, he decided to pay a visit to the Parthenon before calling upon Captain Spicer's representative. Already deep in love with Hellas, that hour on the Acropolis had for him the quality of the most intimate experience with a woman whom he had loved for a long while but whom time and place had never before agreed to surrender to his arms.

"Yet," John thought, "it is really sacrilege to evoke a comparison from human love for this first sight of the greatest monument man has raised to virginity."

And suddenly his fancy went back to that first evening in New York when he and Julius had sat in Madison Square, gazing at the tower of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Building. The estranging waves and the still more bitter estranging years might surge between the skyscrapers of New York and these Athenian ruins. Yet they were nearer far in spirit one to the other than either was to the Gothic dreams in stone or the fat and florid classicism of Rome, and if it was absurd to believe that the skyscrapers of contemporary New York would endure for two and a half millenniums it was not so absurd to imagine that on their sites humanity two and a half millenniums hence would behold the supreme architecture of human aspiration, for it was surely true to assert that the skyscrapers of New York and the buildings on the Acropolis were both deliberate expressions of a spirit of man untroubled by any reference to its questionable immortality or the demands of a divine overseer.

"Nobody I ever read has pointed out how like sugarcandy this weathered marble has become," he murmured aloud, running a finger down the fluting of one of

those great Doric columns "Plaster is a disgusting dead material into which to try to reproduce this glowing marble which stores up the sun's rays like fruit"

He was thinking of Askew's plaster model of the Parthenon in the classroom of the Lower Sixth at St James's School, and of its utter remoteness from the original Well, Greek had been banished now from the boggyland of the English schoolboy It was no longer a necessary part of a polite education Henceforth the shifting sands of science would trickle exiguously through the schoolboy's wearisome hourglass He had cursed his own education when he was suffering from it, but now he thanked God that, instead of retaining in his mind a vague idea of how to measure triangles, a few disjointed facts about organic chemistry, and a belief that he had once upon a time understood the differential calculus, he could look at these sublime ruins and still construe what Plutarch had written about them when they were not yet ruins but already more than five hundred years old

"In such wise were wrought these works of dominating grandeur and at the same time of a matchless form and grace, for one and all, the workmen strove each to excel the other in the beauty of his handicraft The supreme wonder was the speed with which they were built They thought that each would require many ages for completion, yet they were finished in the prime of a single administration In perfect beauty each of them was forthwith old, but in vigour each is as fresh now as if it had been wrought but yesterday, for a fadeless bloom of youth preserves them against the touch of time, and the spirit of an immutable and everlasting Spring seems to have been infused into these works of man"

John put back in his pocket the *Life of Pericles*, and descended from the Acropolis into the underworld of war

In the outer office of Mr Manners Drayton was cordial, for John was not in the Consular Service and therefore he

was not apprehensive of a rival's success and swift promotion

"How's Stern?" he asked "Still as superior as ever?"

"He's very fit, but I haven't noticed that he was being particularly superior," John replied a little coldly

"Ah, but you're not in the Service I think he keeps his manners in an ice-box for our benefit He and I were at Cambridge together when we did our year of Oriental languages after we'd taken our Oxford degrees You were at Exeter, weren't you?"

John nodded

"I was at Lincoln I remember your face perfectly well in the Turl You've been pretty lucky, haven't you? Getting a couple of plays on in London, I mean "

John agreed, wishing that he could get in to Manners and hear what was to happen to him Drayton was the kind of fellow who made you feel thirsty Who the hell cared whether he was at Lincoln or not?

Manners was extremely, even effusively, agreeable when he entered the inner office He reminded John of the English actor's usual conception of the part of a French diplomat The grey imperial and bows and suave chattiness

"I am so delighted to meet you, my dear fellow Ah, I wish it was Constantinople before this horrid war and I could entertain you worthily Yes, rather! I've heard a great deal about you from our friend in London Yes, rather! Wonderful man, isn't he? He's awfully glad you'll be working for him again, and between you and me he was pretty keen to get you back to Adelphi Terrace, but I said it was a pity to waste your practical knowledge in the London office I hope you don't mind my having taken it upon myself to say that?"

"On the contrary, I'm most grateful to you," John assured him quickly He was beginning to think Emil had judged this courteous little man rather harshly

"That's awfully nice of you Yes, rather! Awfully nice But I had a fancy you'd prefer to stay out here somewhere It's going to be quite exciting Gallipoli, eh? By Jove, you must have had a time of it I do hope you're perfectly all right again "

"Oh yes, I'm as fit as anything now "

"That's splendid I'm so glad Yes, rather Gallipoli I know the Peninsula well Used to do a spot of shooting there in the old days Rather different from the kind of shooting going on now, but " he lowered his voice

"I've very little doubt the Powers That Be will ultimately decide on evacuation "

"Wouldn't that damage our prestige throughout the East?" John asked

"It will be a blow It will be a very nasty blow But we couldn't stand another surrender like Kut And the possibility of such a disaster has to be faced Winter, you know, winter is the very devil in the Dardanelles And now with the French entirely occupied with this Salonica business our position on the Peninsula will involve too much of a strain on our resources And mention of Salonica brings me to my telegram asking you to come to Athens I've suggested to the Chief, and he quite agrees, that you should go up to Salonica and work with George Lingfield Did you ever meet him? No? Well, he's a most capable chap Most capable I thought you might perhaps have run against him at Imbros He was over with Selward for a week last month Yes, I consider Lingfield the most capable man we have in the Eastern Mediterranean "

"Better than Stern?" John asked

The sharp grey eyes of Mr Manners brightened with that expression of disinterested concentration and remoteness a lizard assumes when it is watching a fly

"Well, you see, Stern is a consul, and therefore to a large extent his activities are limited by his official position

Lingfield is a freelance Yes, rather! Oh, a real freelance, with a ten years' experience of working for us in the Levant His mother was a Biddulph But don't think I'm depreciating Stern By George, no! The only thing is he's a little bit inclined to be how shall I put it? Arrogant? Yes, I don't think arrogant is too strong a word For instance, I know you were with him in Icaros when he was lucky enough to get hold of that Greek deserter from the Turkish army Now that man undoubtedly gave us a great deal of really valuable information, but that was not quite a good reason for Stern to add at the end of his long, his very long telegram

'Hope you will not edit this information in Athens as I consider I have already tested the man thoroughly' "

"So he had," John declared "He was up all night with him "

"Ah, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! I'm sure he was Please don't, please do *not* think I am crabbing Stern's methods of examination Far from it I consider him most conscientious The point is, though, that we have a quantity of information from other sources here, and it is necessary for us to check every statement, wherever it is possible, of course I'll be quite frank, Ogilvie, I'll be perfectly frank We find Stern just a little bit difficult He can never be wrong "

John saw he should do Emil no good by arguing with Manners about his abilities One day he might have an opportunity to discuss them with Wade, which would be quite another matter

"I suppose you'd like me to get up to Salonica as soon as possible, but I hope you'll give me a day or two to acquire some clothes I'm growing rather tired of this suit I'm wearing, and the suit is growing rather tired of me "

"Of course, my dear fellow, of course Take a week in

Athens Where are you staying? At the Grande Bretagne? Ah, I'm at the Angleterre Just as well, because I'd rather we did not meet in public And I don't want you to come here again, either You quite understand? Oh yes, rather, I knew you would As a matter of fact, I don't think I shall be in Athens much longer myself From information received I fancy ~~we~~ we shall have new Elections next month, and as the Venizelists intend to abstain from the Polls as a protest against what they consider the unconstitutional treatment of the Assembly, that will mean a majority for the Gounarists with probable changes in the police and in all the Government offices In fact an end of benevolent neutrality Athens will no longer be a suitable centre for intelligence work "

"Where will you go?"

Mr Manners looked round cautiously first over his right and then over his left shoulder Then he wrote something on a piece of paper, and pushed it across his desk to John

"Cyprus?"

"My God, Ogilvie, do be more discreet!" the little man gasped, and John could have vowed that the smooth grey hair brushed back from his forehead showed an inclination to stand up like the crest of a cockatoo

"I'm so sorry "

"What *was* the point of my writing down a place on a piece of paper if you were going to blurt it out? Give it me back, please I want to burn it "

He struck a match and watched in a copper jar the tell-tale destination dissolve into ashes, which he stirred and pounded with a ruler till they were dust

"I did think you would have had more discretion than that," he said reproachfully "The Chief wrote me that you were so reliable "

John would have liked to tell Manners that the Chief never made such a fool of himself over the communication

of a piece of information which would be everybody's property in a week or two, and in fact already was in all probability. However, he did not want to antagonize Manners and perhaps find his appointment to Salonica cancelled. So he was tactful.

"I didn't realize there was any danger of being overheard by enemy ears in your office."

"There isn't! There isn't! But it's the principle of the thing. We can never afford in our work to be taken off our guard for one moment. And you must remember that we still have to reach"—his voice dropped to a whisper—"the place I told you about. You must remember that I am now a marked man in Turkey. Suppose I were captured by the Turks?"

Mr Manners shuddered.

"Death is nothing, but suppose they tortured me?" he asked.

John tried to look suitably grave.

"Yes, I see what you mean," he replied, and then nearly laughed again at the fatuity of his comment on being tortured by Turks.

"However, I'm not an alarmist, Ogilvie, and I'm hoping we shall be given a destroyer to convey us to our destination. No submarine would attack a destroyer. You mustn't think that I am afraid. No, rather not. I'm not in the least afraid, but you must bear in mind that ever since the year 1902 I have been secretly serving my country in Constantinople. It's too long a story to tell you how I began, but I started in quite an amateur way. I was in business and when I had made enough to retire at the age of forty-five I wanted a hobby to occupy myself. So I took up intelligence work, and the strain of the responsibility is just beginning to tell on me a little. The work is testing. Yes, rather! It tests the very fibres of a man's being. You'll find that out after you've been a little while at Salonica. And you're young. I'm fifty-seven.

Not quite so resilient as once upon a time And the loss of my wife three years ago was a great shock to me I shan't go back to Constantinople when the war is over That's impossible now I should so much have enjoyed entertaining you there But I shan't go back I have not yet decided where I shall go, but I think it will be either Cheltenham or Leamington, or perhaps Bath "

For some time John discussed with Captain Spicer's representative possible developments of the branch at Salonica, until Mr Manners rose to bow him courteously out by his private door

"Good-bye, Ogilvie You'll be notified in due course of any possible change of address for us You'll like Lingfield very much Yes, rather! And you'll find him thoroughly capable Good-bye, and good luck! You won't recognize me in public, if we *should* meet before you leave Athens? And don't come here again It's the sum total of these little precautions which make a man good or not quite so good at our particular business "

John took leave of the little man, and as he went downstairs looked back to see him still in his doorway, bowing, and gently waving his plump white hand Yes, he could imagine that Emil would not care for him Yet in a way there was something pathetic about Manners The unreal world in which he had been playing like a child for the last twelve years had suddenly become real, and he was going to pieces in it Wade was so magnificently loyal to his men that no doubt he would refuse to listen to any criticism of him whom he always spoke of affectionately as the Mannikin Oh well, he would feel safe enough in Cyprus, though it seemed a roundabout way of getting information through to London, and Manners had been most insistent on the necessity of the Salonica branch's never communicating directly with Adelphi Terrace in any circumstances No doubt he was hoping for a decora-

tion to sport at Cheltenham or Leamington or perhaps Bath, and to attain that he must preserve his importance as the fountain-head of Intelligence in the Near East. One could not blame him for it. Even at Gallipoli, with death round every corner, people had been violently jealous of their prerogatives.

John walked on toward the Grande Bretagne. The beauty of the early morning had turned to rain with a rising southerly wind, and the problem of equipping himself with clothes became a more urgent problem than Mr Manners. Leo Ladas had given him the address of a reliable tailor. It was really a confounded nuisance to have only one suit and a disgustingly dirty Burberry. Probably he would be able to wear naval uniform in Salonica most of the time, but he really must have a few civilian clothes.

Thus meditating, he reached the Grande Bretagne and walked into the dining-room for lunch, feeling in the company of diplomats and distinguished visitors more acutely aware than ever of the deficiencies of his only civilian suit of clothes. It was with the idea of making himself as inconspicuous as possible that he asked the waiter to find him a table in a corner. At the next table a woman was studying the menu. She was in black and in spite of her light brown hair it did not occur to him that she was English until he heard the familiar flat drawl of the well-bred English voice, which one tries unsuccessfully to reproduce by writing 'Waitah,' but which might be more successfully reproduced by the effect of the normally mute French 'e' when it is pronounced for the sake of scansion.

"Waiter, is the lobster quite fresh?"

It was a typically English voice, but there was a note in it which echoed incredibly from across the years. Could it conceivably be Rose's voice in this Athenian hotel? John stared at the light brown hair and the back of

the black tailor-made And then behind him he heard a voice saying

"So sorry, my dear, to be late, but I was kept at the Legation "

And taking the place opposite the woman in black John saw Warburton He had not seen him since he had spent a week-end with him and Rose in Loamshire ten years ago and had decided that rural life with the 'county' bored him Warburton had changed little He would be nearly forty-five now, but save for the thinning of his fair hair and the lines which long authority gives a face he might still have been Henry Falconer, the junior captain of the Loamshires, who had helped John to establish his authority that day in Loam when Edward VII was proclaimed King But what was he doing in Athens? He who had gone out to France in command of the Battalion over a year ago

John rose from his table

"Hullo, Warburton! Hullo, Rose! I thought I recognized your voice when you were dealing with the past of that lobster, but I didn't dare smack you on the back "

"John Ogilvie, by gad! Well, well!" Lord Warburton exclaimed

"But how marvellous, John, to meet you in Athens," Rose said

She was only six months younger than himself, who would be thirty-three the day after to-morrow Yet how immensely much older she seemed in ten years to him than he must surely be seeming to her Indeed, she seemed to him now very much like her own mother whose kingfisher-blue eyes had overawed him in the first year of the century In one comprehensive look he noticed the fine lines etched at the corners of her eyes, the way that powder had replaced the peachbloom of her cheeks, the slight thickening of her figure, and all the obvious signs of maturity which perpetual companionship mercifully

blurs but of which the first sight after a lapse of years is such a shock

"And what are you doing here?" Warburton asked "Come along, sit down and tackle this lobster with the history of whose past Rose has been dealing "

John explained how he came to be in Athens

"Well, I suppose I oughtn't to criticize Intelligence work," Warburton said, stroking his little moustache, "but I think you hush-hush fellahs do more harm than good I suppose you belong to this fellah Manners who didn't appeal to me very much, I'm bound to say I hear he's moving his whole outfit to Cyprus presently I'm glad to hear it I've a ticklish job here as Military Attache, and the less I have to do with that kind of fellah the better I shall be pleased "

John was wondering what Manners himself would say if he could hear his secret plans being discussed openly by the British Military Attaché in the Grande Bretagne dining-room Perhaps his face expressed some dismay at such indiscretion, for Rose said he must not take Henry too seriously Henry had become so very intolerant lately

"He was frightfully annoyed when he was so badly wounded at La Bassée and they wouldn't let him go back to the battalion, but kept him at the War Office till they sent him out here at the end of last month "

"And a jolly fine muddle it is," Warburton declared "This lunatic sideshow at Gallipoli may yet cost us the war if we don't get out of it soon And now this scandalous Salonica business "

John braced himself to argue with a fanatical Western Front man about the ultimate advantages of success at the Dardanelles, but found it hard to keep his end up against the weight of facts that Warburton brought forward in favour of concentrating every man, every gun, every shell, and every cartridge upon the Western Front

"It's the first elementary rule of tactics that you hit your enemy at his strongest point," he declared

"But not of strategy," John reminded him

"By now there's no such thing as strategy in this war. The Germans had their chance in September '14 and missed it in France just as they had their chance in East Prussia in August '14 and took the fullest advantage of it. The war now is simply a matter of slow attrition. The winners will be the side whose men, guns, and ammunition hold out longest."

"What a ghastly prospect!" John exclaimed. "We may go on for another two years at that rate."

"Well, in France we reckon the Germans will crack with the big offensive we shall launch in the summer of 1917, though some of us believe that if no more valuable men and material are frittered away in side-shows we stand a good chance of breaking through next summer. But no more Gallipolis and no more Salonica and less of this locking up of troops in Egypt and at home."

"You *must* be rather annoyed at being sent to Athens," John said.

"I'm furious. Absolutely furious. But I know the King very well. He used to shoot with me whenever he was in England and it was hoped I'd be able to persuade him to come in."

"To reinforce another side-show?" John asked.

"No, the idea is that the Greeks will keep the Bulgarians occupied while the French are trying to re-form the Serbian Army and put it in the field again. All the same I don't think the King will come in. And between ourselves I don't blame him. 'Look here, Warburton,' he said to me only yesterday, 'why the hell should I let the Allies make a bloody cockshy of my country for these French bounders who merely want to keep that unpleasant fellow Sarrail occupied?' Excuse the language, Rosie. But the King's rather fond of a few swear words

'Well, Sir,' I said, 'I see your point of view completely. It's not reasonable, to ask me to do it, Warburton,' he said to me, 'and I'm damned if I will what's more. You can turn Salonica into a zoo, but you're not going to have the Greek army as one of your exhibits.' And he's perfectly right. But of course our Legation here is bewitched by this fellah Venizelos. I haven't seen him yet, and I don't particularly want to, but the King tells me you can't trust the fellow an inch. He's certainly too cute altogether for the diplomats."

"Henry, do be careful what you say. I think the people two tables away are trying to listen."

"My dear Rosie, they can listen as much as they like," Warburton replied irritably. "I'm not going to conceal my opinions so long as I'm Military Attache in Athens. I consider I'm wasting my time out here. I consider I ought to be back in command of the Battalion. That's the kind of warfare I understand. This diplomatic humbug exasperates me. Try and put a little military common sense into your Legation people, Warburton," the King said to me. "I'll do my best, Sir," I told him, "but I'm not very sanguine of the result."

"I'm sure you never saw poor Henry in such a state of irritation before, John," said Rose.

"Never," John replied. "I always regarded him as the most imperturbable of men."

"His wound has made him awfully intolerant."

"Nonsense, Rosie," her husband snapped. "It has nothing to do with my wound. It's the way these politicians refuse to let the soldiers get on with the war. It's heartbreaking to see the way a fellah like Winston is allowed to commit the Army and the Navy to this mad Dardanelles affair. That's one thing about King Constantine. Unless I'm very much mistaken, he is not going to let Master Venizelos play the Winston with him."

Useless to argue, thought John It would be like arguing with a waxwork general of the Crimea at Madame Tussaud's

"I suppose your brother Dick's in France?" he asked Rose

"Dick was killed at Ypres in May," she told him "And Ralph was killed at Loos in the summer "

"Rose, how terrible for you "

"Yes, it has been terrible, particularly for my poor old father It has broken him up completely He's over seventy now, and " she paused

"No more Medicotts at Medicott Hall," he said softly

"No more now, John You knew of course that Ann married Tom Pownall?"

"No, I didn't "

He was thinking of the irony of time

"You remember Tom Pownall?"

"Yes, of course He was Warburton's subaltern in the Stanstead company An awfully good fellow He's not been killed?"

"Not yet," she said a little wearily

"He's second in command of the Battalion," Warburton put in "Out in France where I ought to be "

"Henry, I can't pretend I want you to be back in France," she sighed And then probably because it might hint too emotionally at a personal relationship, she added quickly, "Three small Falconers are rather too much of a responsibility Three girls," she added

No Medicotts left No Warburton heir yet

"And your mother?"

"Oh, she's very well She's taken on my hospital so as to let me come out here with Henry But tell us something about yourself, John We've really quite lost sight of you during the last ten years "

He told her about his plays

"Yes, I remember now you had a play running in London I think it was old Mrs Damson who told me But we never used to go to town I wish I'd seen it "

Yes, time was certainly ironical She with her children, he with his plays Nowadays, with death so busy, one forgot that life was just as ruthless a divider Warburton asked when he was going up to Salonica, and on hearing he expected to be in Athens for a week suggested dinner two days hence

"Clothes are my problem I can't manage a dress-suit by then "

"You needn't bother about dressing People will know you've just come down from that tragic comic-opera at Gallipoli "

"Well, if you don't mind, I'd love to dine with you It'll be a grand birthday-party "

"So it is!" Rose exclaimed, and then through the powder he saw her blush For the length of that swift blush she was eighteen again "Oh dear, how ancient we're all getting," she said, laughing off her brief embarrassment

"Good, then we shall see you at dinner on Thursday And now, Rosie, don't forget we have to drive out to Cephissia and have tea with " he mentioned one of the Royal princesses "You ought to lie down for an hour before we start I wish people would all come back from the country This weather is no fun for a twenty-mile drive "

John spent that wet afternoon in the Museum after a visit to the tailor who vowed to produce him a dress-suit by Thursday evening, much to his relief

The weather next morning was exquisite, and meeting Rose in the lounge of the hotel, he suggested driving her to Cape Colonna to see the Temple of Poseidon A telephone call was put through to the Legation Warburton thought it was a capital notion if she was sure it

would not tire her too much. As far as he could make out it was a forty-mile drive. They had better take lunch with them from the hotel and be sure of getting back to Athens before dusk.

The chauffeur, though of course he drove at a furious pace, was unusually aware of the countryside and told them what a pity it was they had chosen Autumn for their visit since there were so few flowers now whereas in Spring he took both hands off the steering-wheel for a moment to express with a gesture beyond words the beauty of the flowers along this road in Spring.

"I think Autumn is a more appropriate season for us, Rose," John observed.

"Oh, my dear, we're not so ancient as all that," she replied, with a light laugh, but he knew by the quick little nervous gesture with which she pushed closer round her throat the scarf she was wearing that she had not missed the allusion he had made involuntarily, and for making which he was annoyed with himself.

It may not have been Spring, but Spring could not have offered a lovelier view of land and sea than that sheer headland offered upon this calm and clear autumnal day. They spread a rug on the pavement of the stylobate beneath those fluted columns which time had not conquered. Late bees buzzed hopefully in the sunlight, lizards darted from chink and crevice of the marble, minute herbs freshened by the October rain gave forth their sharp aroma to the lucid air. Far below fishermen were hauling a net from the aquamarine of the cove at the cliff's base. Zea and Kythnos marked where the clustered Cyclades began westward, and eastward of the south Aegina dreamed.

"This is Greece," John sighed.

"And no mosquitoes here," she added. "Aren't these egg sandwiches good?"

The car was out of sight where the road had come to an

end and left them to scramble up the rough path to the temple

"They used to ascribe this temple to Athene," John told her "But now they've agreed that this is Poseidon's temple, and I believe the foundations of the temple of Athene can be found about a quarter of a mile away "

She stifled a small yawn

"I'm quite interested, John, but the sun makes one sleepy after the drive," she explained apologetically "Athene? Oh yes, of course I remember That was your mother's name, wasn't it?"

"What a gallant effort! That, and remembering it was my birthday to-morrow!"

"Now don't be sarcastic "

"I'm not being a bit sarcastic It was a gallant effort You're awfully happy, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am awfully happy, John "

"I'm so glad "

"Though when I think of poor old father I feel I've no business to be happy I do hope nothing will happen to Tom Pownall Ann and he are terribly devoted They have one small son "

"And you haven't a son yet?"

Her lips tightened as if to resist a stab of pain

"No "

"Oh well, there's plenty of time "

"Poor Henry," she murmured "I said I was awfully happy, John But we should both have been happier if we had had a son before the war came "

There was a chill in her voice which made him feel that the benign October sun had been obscured, and sensible of some tragic disappointment which perhaps now could never be allayed, he steered abruptly away from Rose's life and began to tell her about his own during the years since they had last met

"It was stupid of me not to go and see your play, John

But there's one thing, if you had married me, you'd probably never have written any plays "

"Why not?"

"Well, I don't see what you would have had to write about if you had married me. Though I adore country life, it's not frightfully exciting, is it?"

"But if you and I had married we might not have lived in the country," he suggested.

"I expect we should. I think I should have been rather silly anywhere else. Even here in Athens I feel rather silly and useless."

"But you've only been here about a fortnight. You'll probably get to like it and become a dazzling hostess extracting priceless diplomatic secrets from the susceptible attaches and secretaries of every Legation in Athens."

She shook her head.

"I'm simply longing for the war to be over, John. Of course, the children are all right with mother, but I want to be back with them. I'm quite a matron these days. We should have been cub-hunting now in England, if it hadn't been for this horrible war."

"But when I wrote to Warburton last year about getting back into my old battalion you sounded completely preoccupied with war work."

"So I was at first. But one didn't realize what the war meant. I remember Dick's writing home at the end of August last year to say that fox-hunting would be very poor sport after chasing Uhlans. He said he was having absolutely the time of his life. And now he's dead. And Ralph's dead. He was in the 60th. They gave him a posthumous D.S.O. and father flung it through the stained-glass coat of arms in the red drawing-room. 'Seven hundred years ended in two months,' he said, and then he had a slight stroke, but he's better again now, though he won't go out or take any part in the affairs of the county."

"It's a pity neither of your brothers married "

"Well, poor old Dick was tied up with a married woman for the last four years, and they couldn't go off together because her husband swore he wouldn't divorce her Oh, one of those hopeless triangles! And Ralph was still taking the Gaiety chorus out to supper And then the war came, and oh well, people themselves never do expect to get killed They never thought Henry would recover, but he has At least he has in a way, but you could tell yesterday at lunch that he's not himself "I often wonder if he ever *will* be himself again Perhaps when we get back home and the war's over oh dear, we're neither of us enjoying Greece at all And I do feel we're behaving so badly to the Greeks I think it's undignified to behave so badly toward a smaller nation The Princess was very scathing about our behaviour yesterday "

"But have you heard the other side of the argument, Rose?"

"Endlessly at the Legation," she replied "The secretaries lecture Henry as if he was a tiresome school-boy "

"Ah, not from the professional diplomat's point of view," said John, "but from Venizelist enthusiasts"

He told her about his visit to the house of Theodore Ladas, and of the way Leo and Euphrosyne had felt about the protracted neutrality

"Oh, if you are so susceptible to the persuasiveness of beautiful young Greek women, John, I shall put you next Antonia Drimys to-morrow night at dinner, and you will be converted all over again "

Rose was as good as her word, and John fortified by the arrival of black clothes from the tailor was feeling less aware of social strain when he sat down at the round table in the hotel beside Antonia Drimys who he had to admit was as beautiful as Euphrosyne Ladas She might have rivalled Atalanta, so long were her legs, so lithe her form

Her profile was as classic as Euphrosyne's, but instead of her ivory pallor she was sun-coloured like a peach, and John did not think he had ever seen human flesh glow with such a warmth. The other guests were the Dutch Minister and his wife, a Colonel of the Greek General Staff, and one of the Secretaries of the American Legation and his wife. John as an extra was between Antonia Drimys and the Greek Colonel.

It was about half-way through dinner that the Colonel turned to John and said he understood he was presently on his way to Salonica.

"I think we are treating the Entente officers with great civility," he observed.

"With much too much civility," Antonia Drimys proclaimed fiercely. "If Lord Warburton will pardon my frankness?"

"Oh, I'm on genuinely neutral territory in Athens," said Warburton.

John had avoided an argument at dinner, but when they all adjourned to the drawing-room he asked Antonia Drimys to tell him why she was so bitterly against her country's entering the war.

At first she was fierce on the subject of the disloyalty and treachery of Venizelos, denouncing him for his willingness to surrender Cavalla to the Bulgarians.

"Yes, that's all very well," John argued. "But you can't feel so strongly about a policy unless it is something larger than a difference of opinion between a King and his late Prime Minister. I've just come from staying with some people in Lipsia who feel just as strongly as you do the other way."

"I suppose you mean that buffoon Theodore Ladas?" she enquired scornfully.

"I do mean Theodore Ladas, but I don't agree with the epithet."

"He can only bark for the Cretan, but he can do

nothing Therefore I call him a buffoon And his son is just as stupid as he is "

"And his daughters?"

"You mean Euphrosyne?"

"Both of them "

"Ah, but I can guess it is Euphrosyne who has been talking to you Well, she was at school with me, and she is quite mad With her poetry!" she added with contempt

"I should have thought the last reproach a Greek would fling against another Greek was poetry," John retorted "As a matter of fact I didn't see any of her poetry I don't know whether it's good or bad But Euphrosyne herself impressed me And having been impressed by what one beautiful young woman told me about her country I'm waiting to be impressed by what another beautiful woman has to tell me"

"Please do not make stupid compliments "

"I'm not bothering about compliments," John said sharply "If you suppose I'm trying to pay you compliments I shall continue to think you a beautiful young woman, but I shall also think you rather a silly young woman, who like so many silly women can only get out of a bad case by bringing round the argument to herself "

Antonia Drimys looked furiously round at the company, but the Colonel was talking to her host, the American Secretary was talking to her hostess, and the Dutch Minister was expatiating over an album of photographs to his wife and the wife of the American Secretary

"Join which group you like," John laughed "Don't let me keep you I thought you would be able to explain to me the point of view of your side of the question, but apparently for you the whole future of your country is to be settled by the outcome of the personal antipathy between the King and M Venizelos "

"You are prejudiced like all the other English except Lord Warburton What is the use of talking to you?"

"Theodore Ladas says you are all afraid on the mainland of the influence of the Island Greeks and that you do not want Smyrna and Miletos and a large slice of Asia Minor and perhaps even Constantinople because you might be, indeed would be overshadowed by the superior vigour of New Greece"

"It is absurd," Antonia Dimys, contradicted passionately "And if he thinks that it is because he knows too well what ambition is in his friends We have conquered enough in our own wars against Turkey and Bulgaria Let us put our new territory in order, that is if the Entente will kindly allow us, before we try to absorb more territory These Anatolian and Island Greeks look to Constantinople and not to Athens"

"Then you are afraid of being swamped?"

"Would you like it if after the war Australia and Canada and South Africa told you that England is no longer the heart of your Empire, but that you must be ruled by your colonies?"

"I don't think it's a possible comparison," said John

"Besides, you are forgetting that perhaps the Entente will not win the war," she jeered, "and then where will be all the splendid dreams of the Venizelists?"

"The Entente must win the war"

She shrugged her shoulders

"You did not show us a very grand demonstration of invincible might at the Dardanelles And now you are going to Salonica to be safer You can starve Greece with your fleet, but if the Bulgars and Germans put you into the sea your fleet cannot help you"

"So your final argument is that you're afraid Germany is going to win the war I'm disappointed I thought you'd be able to give me a better reason than that for breaking the treaty with your allies the Serbians"

"The condition of coming to the help of Serbia was

that Serbia should have an army of 150,000 in being
Where is that army? Scattered among the mountains ”

“The Entente offered to supply the 150,000 ”

“And at present the Entente has sent 20,000 My friend, you know as well as I do that the Entente has no hope of sending the army it has promised Leave us in peace, I say We have fought for what we have gained We do not want another war Perhaps when you have fought a little longer yourself you will not be so anxious for war ”

John thought of Euphrosyne weeping for her country beside that orange-grove in Lipsa

“You’ve disappointed my expectations,” he said
“You apparently despise Euphrosyne Ladas for writing poetry You seem to think Greece has finished with poetry But at any rate Euphrosyne has the spirit in her that *was* Greece If it had not been for that spirit a hundred years ago there would be mosques and minarets in Athens to-day ”

“But how dare you say that ?” she exclaimed

“It’s true And without Venizelos in 1913 you would have been where you were in 1897 It is because you here on the mainland know it in your hearts that you resent him ”

“I think it is ridiculous for you to argue about what you do not understand ”

“I didn’t mean to argue,” John assured her “I really did want to try to understand your point of view I know the course Venizelos desires to follow is dangerous, but the whole world is in danger now, and you can’t afford to sit back and play for safety without risking the whole future of your country If you declared war on the Entente and treated us as the Belgians treated Germany I might think you very foolish, but I’d respect you ”

“Then no small country is to be allowed to keep what it has won for itself with the blood of its people? We must

fight on one side or the other because we are small? Is that what you say?"

"Well, when you put it that way," John admitted, "I feel less sure of myself. Actually I think it's infernal to bully small nations. But surely the majority of the country is in favour of going to war with the Entente?"

"It is not."

"The elections?"

"The majority for Venizelos was in New Greece. Of course they will give him a majority. But let the country vote for or against war and it will vote against him. Let me tell you something. You have come to Athens from Gallipoli, where you have been disappointed because something that seemed so easy turned out to be so difficult. You can only think of one idea—how you can have Constantinople. You meet some of those enthusiastic islanders and refugees from Anatolia, and they make you believe that except for a wicked King and his clique Greece will help you take Constantinople. But I ask you to go round everywhere on the mainland and you will find quite a different opinion. Look at Lord and Lady Warburton. They have not come here with their minds already made up, and they understand that the true feeling is quite different from what your Legation believes, because your Legation people see only Venizelos and Venizelists and avoid the other side. Oh well, we must not talk any more. One day perhaps you will find I am right. But who knows what humiliations my poor country must suffer before the truth is discovered. And now let us leave politics, please."

When the evening was over Rose asked John if he had been converted by Antonia Drimys.

"No," he replied. "But she has convinced me the two parties in Greece are more equally matched than I supposed and that they are utterly irreconcilable."

"And so?"

“And so I shall go up to Salonica, wondering what kind of a hash we shall all make of Greece between us before the war is over”